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GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

WAYLAND HILTON-YOUNG

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO has no message for our times (except perhaps the danger of approximating life to art), and his influence on contemporary writers is negligible. For this reason he is interesting; there is perhaps no writer who was so obviously 'great' and so widely venerated in his lifetime who has fallen so completely out of sight.

D'Annunzio was at the same time poet, playwright, novelist, practical joker, adventurer and protofascist. He lived from 1863, when the Italian state was still seven years from completion, when Carducci was only twenty-eight, until 1938, when Fascism was only five years from its downfall. He was born of unremarkable parents at Pescara, a sizeable fishing port on the Adriatic coast of Italy, in the Abruzzi. The Abruzzi is a desolate province. As one goes south out of Tuscany and Umbria the cypresses stop, churches and castles no longer face each other across narrow valleys, and the little green hills give way to towering drab moors where one may walk for a whole day without seeing a house. The people are now, as they were then, few and poor; they sow and harvest ten ears of corn behind each sheltering rock. Their religion is sombre and passionate; d'Annunzio himself described the astonishing waves of emotion which drove them out in wailing pilgrimages on their knees, or even on their bellies, to the scene of a reported miracle. He knew these people; he wrote effective short stories about their intense and narrow lives, and his best novel, *Il Trionfo della Morte*, has them for chorus. But he left the Abruzzi when he went to school and never returned.

His father died before d'Annunzio was grown up and, though his mother lived on, d'Annunzio rarely visited her. He sent her copies of each of his books inscribed in terms of fulsome convention and often wrote of her in letters and fragments of autobiography as a 'saint', as a 'martyr', as a 'benign influence', and so on. But in fact the relationships he felt deeply and described well were only two: with dead men and live women. His types of humanity were the venerated teacher and the passionate mistress.

D'Annunzio went through many phases in his life; the first was purely aesthetic. At sixteen he decided to be a poet, and looked about him to see how it was done. What he saw was egoistic romanticism. The *Risorgimento* was over and the literary scene was dominated by the greatest and most objective of the romantics,

Giosuè Carducci. Carducci, large, square, bearded, anti-clerical, indeed atheistic, was the Italian counterpart of the Victorian Giant. He had a powerful direct intelligence, and his poetic faculty was energetic, stable, and observant. Above all instead of seeming to shape his verse out of wax he seemed to carve it out of granite, which in a language as mellifluous and mincing as Italian was something entirely new. Partly d'Annunzio revolted against the influence of Carducci, partly he absorbed it. He absorbed particularly the anticlericalism and its complementary leaning towards Hellenic mythology. Carducci's preference on Olympus had been for Zeus, Appollo and Hephaestus; d'Annunzio's, from the first, was for Dionysus, Ares, Aphrodite and Ganymede. But they shared the attitude which first inspired Carducci's famous incendiary ode:

O Satana, O Ribellione.

So there appeared the first slim volume of schoolboy verse. It was not good. There was a lot of meticulous description of nature and some adolescent erotics. Candid charms escaped from neglected attire; nevertheless, some pages further on he did not want the cold embraces of venal love, and only his horse cared for him truly. But there was promise too, particularly of the musical use of the language in which he was always great, whatever nonsense he came to write.

The Italians have an unreasoning and sentimental respect for youth, and d'Annunzio's book of verse attracted more attention than it would have in England or France. Eminent critics were enthusiastic and mentioned Rimbaud. But while the boy Rimbaud made poetry by applying discipline to a violently eccentric mind, the boy d'Annunzio made poetry, when he did, by abandoning insipid convention for a contrived eccentricity. One may guess that the praise of the critics was so agreeable to the schoolboy that he desired only that it should continue, and from this desire sprang the first of a series of characteristic pranks; he put a notice in a local newspaper announcing his own death in a riding accident. The critics rose to the bait and enthusiastic obituaries duly appeared. If there is in Italy a sentimental admiration for youth, there is a positive passion for dead youth.

This anecdote, which shows the early beginning of d'Annunzio's passion for praise, and another more serious experience, which he himself divulged long after, together anticipate much of the man in the boy. At about the same time he was visiting a church in Bologna with his father. He had left his father and was exploring the church alone when, in a disused chamber under the organ, he came on a neglected terra-cotta Deposition. By the effigy a butcher had piled carcase meat in readiness for the next day's market. Looking at the

figure of Christ's mother and at the flesh he was assailed by thoughts of the mystery of generation in the flesh and of his own mother. Then cats came, and, in his own words, 'wailed against that carven wailing'. He ran back to his father in the church, and someone began to play the organ. As he heard the music, he felt as though 'his bones had been emptied of marrow and made hollow the better to answer the organ pipes'. Later he learned to cultivate that emptying of the bones for sympathy with experience not his. 'Not to know the trouble', he wrote, 'of certain obscure existences, the taste of bread to the beggar, the feeling which the rope round his neck gives to one about to be hanged, the circles of immobility in the mind of a mandarin, the extasy which goes before the healing of a paralytic at Lourdes, the cuts, the dislocations, the stabs of a fakir; not to know so many and so many varieties of human feeling often makes me inconsolable.'

D'Annunzio did not go to a university but started as a journalist in Rome as soon as he left school. For some years he lived in the new capital the life of a dog about town, and quickly became a formidable dramatic critic. Making and unmaking the reputations of actresses was much to his taste, and he embarked on the strenuous career of promiscuity which he certainly did not abandon until he was well on in life, and which he would not admit he had abandoned even in the extreme decay of his old age. He fought a duel over some affair of bedroom honour, was severely cut on the top of his head, and shortly went quite bald. Ever after he was at pains to explain that his baldness was entirely due to this cut, and that the only flaw in his appearance was itself the result of his amorous valour. His novels and more books of verse began to appear, and one may find part, but part only, of his motive in writing them in a remark he made to his secretary: 'Nowadays the laurel serves but to entice the myrtle. An author's true royalties are his affairs.' He married in his early twenties the fair-haired daughter of a duke. She bore him children, but the marriage lasted only three years.

In 1897, when he was thirty-three, began d'Annunzio's first period of politics; he was elected deputy. He sat on the benches of the right and his attitude to the business of the Legislature was summed up by a French contemporary who called him the 'Deputy for Beauty'. Three years later, at the beginning of the new century, there was a sharp swing to the left in the country; a liberal government came to power and there was for the first time talk of legislation to protect the socialist trades unions. At the first session of the new liberal parliament d'Annunzio ostentatiously rose from his place among the conservatives and walked across the Chamber to sit among the socialists and near-anarchists on the extreme left, announcing as he went: 'I go towards life.' It was a trivial enough gesture, but it

caught on: the phrase became common to describe the new era of toleration and liberalism. D'Annunzio knew nothing of labour politics or indeed of any real politics; but the incident is worth mentioning since it showed for the first time his extraordinary ability to sum up a popular movement in a phrase and a gesture. One may picture d'Annunzio the politician as a small effeminate tenor, sitting alone in a gilded gondola on a great river in spate, absurd, almost contemptible, but singing aloud a marvellous song which echoes from bank to bank.

He did not stay in Parliament, but early in the nineteen hundreds went to live on the hill above Florence in the Villa Capponcina. Here before long he had gathered ten horses, fifteen servants, thirty greyhounds, which he fed on cutlets and old brandy, two hundred pigeons, fourteen thousand books, and a tortoise which died of a surfeit of rose petals. He installed a pianola among some Gothic stone tracery of his own design and in a place of honour a death-mask of Wagner, Cosima's gift. On one gatepost he had inscribed: 'Beware of the dog,' and on the other: 'Beware of the master.' In this fantastic atmosphere, overscented, overheated, he wrote his best work. He became a national legend, the aesthetic superman, the millionaire on credit, the stay-at-home Don Juan. Pilgrims came; there were the real artists, like the composer Pizzetti, with whom he talked of the craft of writing and the stage; there were the neophytes, dim decadents and dim bruisers, athirst for fulfilment, whom he would harangue and dismiss or, better still, drive away by having the dampers in the boiler house opened so that the rooms became intolerably hot to anyone but himself; and, most important of all, there were the women. Every day he received a mass of fan-mail. Letters from men were thrown away; letters from women were put in a pile which, during a spell of hard work, would grow several hundred high. When next he was bored he would take the top twenty and write passionate answers to them, throwing the rest away. Then he sat back and waited. The women came, and went, or stayed. Those who stayed were sometimes put in the next novel, hardly disguised except in name, and became known throughout Italy (and indeed France) in a series of explosive, theatrical, larger-than-life portraits in which the outward person was described with a detail at once meticulous and poetic, and the character stood half hidden behind, with some heroic virtue or vice caught in a Caravaggiesque highlight. One of these women has left an account of her first arrival at the Capponcina. She waited a long time among the incense smoke and the leopard skins, the crucifixes and the programmes of the Folies Bergères, the pianola and the totem-poles, until the little bald middle-aged man appeared, correctly dressed, and with correct manners. He gave her tea and talked to her so long about the theatre

that she began to think she had misread his letter. Then, as she and all the women he met described it, 'it began'. 'It,' as far as one can learn, was just that he talked poetry to her. There is a good deal of evidence for thinking that he could talk poetry as surely and magnificently as he could sometimes write it, and his manuscripts seem to bear it out. His was the handwriting of a man who writes at a tremendous speed; corrections are few, and it was one of his boasts that he only had time to write a small proportion of what he carried in his mind. Add to this that he had a voice famous for clarity and musicalness, and one can perhaps understand 'it', in spite of the bald head and the shortness of stature. Not that he was averse from the more ardent and striking gesture. There was another woman who arrived at his house on a fine horse: it was put to lie on a Persian rug in the drawing-room.

His financial affairs were chaotic. He had no bank account, but kept his money in notes which he would move each day from an old trunk to a book on the shelf and thence under a pedestal, and so on, claiming it would take a thief longer to find it than it took him to spend it himself. By 1910 he had sold several of his horses to buy fodder for the rest and finally he auctioned the villa itself and its contents. He went to live at Arcachon, in south western France, where he remained until the outbreak of war. He became, in effect, a Frenchman and wrote verse and stories in French. Anatole France said of him: 'Few, alas, write French as well as he.' During the next few years he became more fantastic, more famous, more theatrical. The d'Annunzio legend was enhanced by the currency of such of his remarks as this: 'The love of Madame X is, so to speak, an official love. One receives her caresses in the same frame of mind as one receives the Legion of Honour. I assure you that as I climbed down from her bed I had the impression of having slept with the Council of Ministers.'

His writing since the apprenticeship in Roman journalism and the false start in politics had been novels, verse, and towards the end of the period, plays. His novels were the least good. If he had written no verse and played no part in politics they would be recognized perhaps as period pieces, but certainly not much read. But as it is, every Italian, even of the generation which grew up during and after the last War, has read them. At first he will not admit they affected him one way or the other. Press him, and he will vilify and condemn them with a certain fear in his tone, or he will extol them with a secret and awful pleasure. This is partly post-war politics, for d'Annunzio was after all the inventor of all the display and swagger in Fascism, but it is also because his novels are the very last word in the swollen, sensuous, gorgeous, drunken, uncritical style of writing from which all literary Europe today is still in hard-headed reaction.

They are Dionysiac, and today we are all Apollonian and Promethean. Their most obvious ancestor is Nietzsche, but critics have found very many other influences, the principal foreign ones being Oscar Wilde — *l'Oscarvaidismo* is quite a well-pigeonholed literary school in Italy — and, appropriately enough, Ouida.

In *L'Innocente*, a husband deserts his wife. She conceives a child by another man, but the husband returns to her just before its birth. The child's father falls ill of a disease which is going to kill him in a few months, and, in the changed circumstances and chastened by suffering in childbed, the wife restores her affection to her husband, and looks forward to a happy future with him and the child of her adultery. But the husband, conscience-stricken because it had been he who first broke the marriage, cannot tolerate the prospect of life with a son not his own and in order, as he hopes, to preserve his new-found second love for his wife, kills the baby. He is not found out, and at the end of the book one is left wondering how he got on with his conscience. It is a good plot, and the narrative parts are well told. The characters act properly on each other, and there is always an adequate reason for their next action. But the characters themselves are defective, they are partly-filled vessels, and, worse still, each character and each action is deeply embedded in a kind of compost-heap of purple descriptive writing. They cannot sit out on the terrace after dinner but they find themselves under an oleander whose blossoms are symbolic not only of old legends and Jungian archetypes with which one is, with luck, familiar, but also of old romances and emotions of d'Annunzio's own with which one cannot possibly be familiar. But the compost of symbolic flowers, jewels, fruit, and so on, does not predominate in this novel, and for that reason it is still readable.

His most famous and in many ways his best novel was *Il Trionfo della Morte*. Here the plot is not more than rudimentary and the compost is enormously developed. For plot, there is just this: a sensitive aristocratic young man and his sensitive middle-class young mistress live together for some months carefully exploring the variety of feeling they have for each other. They take a cottage on the coast of the Abruzzi near d'Annunzio's birthplace, and there undergo such a strenuous course of Nietzsche and Wagner that they finally jump off a cliff together. Of course this is absurd, and indeed the novel itself is absurd, if one can keep one's head. But one cannot keep one's head, because in this case the compost is so happily mixed that the fumes it gives off intoxicate and enthrall. Death is the main ingredient, as the title and the absurd plot indicate; the brutal death of paralytic and scorbutic peasants, overtaking them before their wasted knees can bring them to the healing shrine; the aesthetic, pantheistic death of the hero's musical uncle, who left, as it were, a

chord of C sharp minor in each room he had inhabited; the pathetic, almost imperceptible, death of a peasant woman's baby; the ugly death of a suicide accidentally seen on a walk in Rome; the legendary death of Tristan and Isolde; and finally the lovers' leap. Other elements are sex (against these interwoven deaths the loves of the hero and heroine are described with meticulous and poetic clarity); and animals, which are not observed, loved, and respected as in, for instance, D. H. Lawrence, but treated as gorgeous heraldic blazons inspiring either a wild goose-chase after allegories or ready-made emotions in big blocks marked 'Pity', 'Fear', and so on; and finally, as before, there are flowers, fruit, and jewels. The final effect of it all on the reader is one of resentful exaltation: — exaltation because it really seems poetic and rich and passionate and fast and powerful, and resentful because one knows in the last resort that one has had the wool pulled over one's eyes, and that it is all twaddle, a conjuring-trick.

Fuoco is beyond the pale. Here everything is compost; there is no plot at all. There are only two noticeable characters; d'Annunzio himself and the great tragic actress Eleonora Duse, 'she of the beautiful hands'. Changed in nothing but name they float through a compost-rich version of the Venice of the time. The book was written at the height of d'Annunzio's fame when his verse dramas drew full houses of the Venetian rich and his verse readings full houses of the Venetian intellectuals. In the novel, if one can call it a novel, the two characters swan about in gondolas, she shakes the civilized earth with her presentation of his leading parts, he shakes it with his readings of his own verse in the Hall of the Grand Council in the Doge's Palace, and, as always, fruit, flowers, and jewels abound. There is a graceful body of devotees who treasure his obscure revelations; — 'You, straight-nosed boy, alone of all my followers, understand the true sense in which the pomegranate is my especial fruit.' It is, in short, a description of the prophet enthroned. The book would be wholly repulsive were it not for the interest of the fact that a lot of it is true, that the life of d'Annunzio and the Duse in Venice was largely as he describes it.

His verse was all effusive and descriptive, never narrative. The technique is one of the interpenetration of images one in another. He seldom uses images one at a time, and when he does he uses them in such a swift succession that the reader's memory confuses them as his eye assimilates into white the colours of the spectrum when they are painted on a spinning disk. More often d'Annunzio does the mixing himself so that one has, for instance, the images of a rose, a ruby, a pomegranate, blood from a wound, Christ's Passion, the defloration of a virgin, and red Dolomite rock all running together. He deliberately empties his bones of marrow so

that they shall be able to answer sonorously to as many stimuli together as possible. He describes this process himself in one verse of the poem *Il Fanciullo*. In this poem he is addressing a boy playing the pipes, or a spirit in the guise of a boy, whom, in this verse, we can take to signify poetry. Characteristically at different stages of the poem the boy represents many different things; wild nature, pagan religion, love, the beloved, freedom, understanding and so on. To the boy, primarily as poetry, then, he says:

Ogni voce in tuo suono si ritrova
e in ogni voce sei
sparso, quando apri e chiudi i fori alterni.
Par quasi che tu sol le cose muova
mentre solo ti bei
nell'obbedire ai movimenti eterni.
Tutto ignori, e discerni
tutte le verità che l'ombra asconde.
Se interroghi la terra, il ciel risponde;
se favelli con l'acque, odono i fiori.¹

His plays are of a piece with his novels and his verse; magniloquent, colourful flights of declamation without plot or moral, and each soaked in a slightly different but always brilliant dye; incest, it might be, or the foundation of cities. At this distance his plays are less interesting in themselves than because they mark the first stage of a change of life in d'Annunzio, obscure at first but becoming clearer when after the war of 1914 the amorous poet has become the first fascist dictator. To understand the last phase of d'Annunzio's activity one must look not at the plays but at his motive for writing them.

He began as a conventionally aesthetic adolescent and found his true vein as an eccentric poet, he tried out and abandoned the frock-coated politics of the new Roman democracy, and he discarded marriage and settled down to a methodical rakehood. When he was in his late forties he had reached the summit of his literary achievement and had passed the summit of his physical vigour. The critic Luigi Russo says that in turning to the stage and later to autocratic politics d'Annunzio was seeking an escape from the 'obscure solitude of the voluptuary'. But what happened was less an escape from solitude than an expansion of the dominating pattern of his emotional life. D'Annunzio's main pleasure was to affect others.

¹ All voices in your notes are found again, and you in all voices are scattered as you open and close the alternate stops of your pipe. It seems almost as if you alone moved all things, while you bow only in obedience to the eternal movements. You know nothing, and you see all truth which the shadows conceal. When you ask of the earth the sky answers; when you discourse with the waters the flowers hear.

He wanted to see the impact of Gabriele d'Annunzio on other consciousnesses and even more he wanted to feel the returned effect on himself of emotions aroused by his own impact. Hence, obviously, his promiscuity. Each new woman reacted to him in a different way and reflected again upon him in a different way. But after thirty years the changes had been rung out, and he was middle-aged. So from the mistress he turned to the theatre audience. Through his actors and actresses he shouted to them: 'D'Annunzio!' and they answered, as he wished: 'D'Annunzio!' But he must play upon and affect more people than one theatre could hold, so he wrote his plays to inflame and heighten and join his name and attitudes to certain political currents which were beginning to run in Italy in the decade before the outbreak of war. Frock-coated democracy was boring in itself and some aspects of it were intolerably boring. The Prime Minister, Giolitti, the arch-Trimmer and arch-stealer of everybody's clothes, was both boring and ignoble; the socialists, part solid and respectable and part esoteric academic philosophers, were doubly boring because only twenty years before they had been persecuted and anarchistic and exciting. It was the age of Futurism, of the worship of noise, of self-expression at any cost. To a bored, 'futuristic', petulant, and particularly to a young audience, D'Annunzio addressed his plays. He appropriated the young of the years 1908-1914 by spelling them, not *giovane* but *giovine*. For a young man to call himself *giovine* with an *i* made him somehow specially a d'Annunzian, a follower, one of the elect. It spoke of great things to come. D'Annunzio did not as yet urge his *giovini* to any particular end; he confined himself to saying it was most important to be active, to attack, to feel everything terribly deeply, to vibrate, to destroy, to create. The untranslatable Italian word for this attitude was *volontarismo* — the doctrine of the will. But it is the doctrine of the undirected will, and as such differs from the Nietzschean doctrine of the *Wille zur Macht*. It does not matter what you will so long as you will it good and hard. This aimless turbulence was common in Italy at the time; a version of it was to be found on the extreme left wing in politics where the syndicalist followers of Georges Sorel taught that the Revolution should be willed, but not planned. It was in this syndicalist wing of the socialist left that Mussolini worked and learned. D'Annunzian *volontarismo* was on the right wing and found its admirers among the young nationalists and extreme conservatives. Once again he summed up the movement in a phrase: *Arma la prora e salpa verso il mondo*: arm the prow and leap towards the world. It means little enough, yet it caught on and became the slogan of a generation, the generation of *giovini*. One can still see it, inadequately painted out, on bathhouses all over Italy.

When the War came in 1914 d'Annunzio watched from Paris the confusion and unease of Italy. The old respectable nations, France, England, Austria, were going once more about their old game, and the ill-made young giant Germany was taking an equal part in it. What should be the course of Italy, the other young nation? Her interests were not immediately affected by the struggle, and she had ties of commerce and sentiment with both sides. For nine months she stood aside while the angry politicians debated action and inaction. A growing weight of opinion favoured intervention on the side of the Allies, because it did not befit the dignity of a nation to stand by while the future of Europe was decided on the battlefield. D'Annunzio's *giovini* did not much mind on which side they fought, but, in accordance with *volontarismo*, they were determined to fight someone. Sentimental patriotism suggested they should fight the Austrians as their fathers had. At last, in May 1915, it leaked out that the Allies had secretly offered Italy better terms for her help than had the Central Powers for her neutrality. There was a government crisis; something had to be done. D'Annunzio decided his moment had come; the river was in spate, it was time for the tenor to take his place in the gilded gondola. He went to Genoa and made a great speech about arming the prow. Then he took a slow train to Rome. Crowds gathered at each stop; he addressed them, and they cheered. At Rome he was met by an immense crowd, which he addressed about the glory of war and personal regeneration through heroism. They responded with: *Viva d'Annunzio!*

The political situation was this: Parliament was in recess, but the Prime Minister and the Government were known to favour intervention with the Allies. The elder statesman Giolitti, then out of office, was known to favour neutrality. He too had taken a train to Rome and when he arrived a clear majority of Deputies, since they could not vote him into office, had left their cards at his house as a sign of their confidence. In democratic common sense the King should have called him to form a government, but by the Constitution he was not bound to do so. D'Annunzio decided to see to it that he did not. For a few days he led *i giovini* about the streets of Rome, waving banners, shouting slogans, arming the prow. Italy was at the crisis of her existence as a nation, he told them; by choosing the active path now their generation would be remembered as national heroes for all time. 'Radiant May' he called that month, and once again the phrase caught on. He achieved his immediate end; the King did not call Giolitti. Thus the King, the poet, and the mob overrode a clear parliamentary majority and Italy entered the war beside England and France.

D'Annunzio was lionized in Rome for a month and then went to the front. 'The front' was wherever he chose. Now a full-blown

national hero, he designed himself a uniform and performed feats of indescribable gallantry leading troops in the Alps, flying fighter aircraft, or commanding motor torpedo boats in the Adriatic as he saw fit. He bumped one eye on the machine gun when he made a bad landing one day in his fighter plane, lost the use of it, and for the rest of the War cultivated a piratical black patch. He was allowed to form a special corps of *Arditi*, daredevils, who were a sort of super-commandos. They lived in privileged ease behind the lines and were called forward whenever a cut-throat attack or other spectacular action was needed, and often (so the rest of the army thought) when it was not. But they acquired a conspicuous glamour and became a national institution.

It was with demobilized *Arditi* and their younger brothers who had been disappointed of the War that d'Annunzio occupied Fiume in 1919. This extraordinary adventure, which introduced the quarter-century of Fascism and Nazism, arose in this manner. After the War there was a spectacular increase of socialism in Italy, and all seemed set for something like a counterpart of the Russian Revolution of 1917. There was a series of bloody general strikes, there was rioting, arson, beatings up, marches, countermarches; a turmoil and a misery that seemed always tottering on the brink of civil war and never quite slipped over the edge. At first the Italian Bolsheviks had it all their own way, but after a while the nationalist right began to take heart and to look round for great deeds to do which would astonish the nation and put the red rabble back in its place. The city of Fiume was then in much the position that Trieste is in now; it was occupied by a mixed contingent of British, French, and Italian soldiers. The Italian nationalists decided the continuation of this regime was an affront to the honour of the *Patria*, and in the late summer of 1919 d'Annunzio gathered round him a band of 'Legionaries', consisting of adolescents made bellicose by having missed the glory of being proper *Arditi* in the War, of demobilized soldiers discontented with the monotony of civil life, and even of some mutinous units of the Army and Navy complete with officers. In contravention of Italy's treaty obligations and of her domestic law d'Annunzio armed the prow and marched into Fiume at the head of his legions on September 12th, 1919. The British and French garrison regarded this as the last straw, for the allied occupation of Fiume had brought nothing but trouble and bickering since it began; they withdrew. D'Annunzio installed himself in the finest Renaissance palace and proclaimed the Constitution of the Province of Fiume. It was, of course, the queerest of constitutions; it was concerned not with checks, balances, or the devolution of power, but with the realization of the whole by means of the parts, the institutional safeguarding of the poetic afflatus, and so on. All men were

to be wholly free and wholly equal, but the Commander had absolute power and there was to be the most gorgeous and intricate hierarchy. The State was to be corporative, and the corporations were to be ten in number; first the labourers, second the managers and technicians, third the shopkeepers, and so on. The tenth 'had no special trade or register or title', it was 'reserved for the mysterious forces of progress and adventure'. The Constitution ends: 'In the pauses of music is heard the silence of the Tenth Corporation.'

The state of Fiume was held together for fifteen months by display and oratory. D'Annunzio introduced the so-called Roman salute, the outstretched arm and hand, which was later adopted by both Fascists and Nazis, and each morning would appear on his balcony to harangue the Legionaries.

'What shall we do with the Deputies?' he would shout.

'Make sausage-meat of them,' came the Legionaries' answer.

'No, they'd poison us.'

'Then we'll smack their bottoms in Piazza Colonna.'

'That's better.'

He also invented the litany of Fascism:

Leader: A chi la vittoria?

Mob: A noi!

Leader: A chi la gloria?

Mob: A noi!

Leader: A chi l'Italia?

Mob: A noi!

All: Eia! Eia! Alalà!

And he gave his Legionaries the motto, which was later adopted by the Fascists: *Me ne frego!* — 'What the hell!' or *Je m'en fiche!*

Eia! Eia! Alalà! means nothing at all, but within a year the newly arisen Fascists were chanting it all over the country as they rode out to terrorize and bully the socialists and liberals with a truncheon in one hand and a bottle of castor oil in the other.

D'Annunzio sent his secretary-companion, Antongini, to Paris as Carnatic Ambassador, with a passport stamped: 'State Forgery Office.' Antongini was shortly enrolled in the honorific order of Buccaneers for stealing a copy of a secret paper written by President Wilson on what the Italian Government ought to do about Fiume. It was at this time that d'Annunzio's eldest son emerged from the obscurity of his career as a business-man in America. He came to Fiume, observed the wild pageantry and folly at its height, and said: 'The enterprise has not yet reached its full efficiency.'

The former socialist Mussolini was at this time founding the new Fascist Party which was to discipline the reds, restore Italy's honour among the nations, and revive her flagging economy with doses of

authoritarian planning. He was not yet in sight of the demagogic but limited power he seized in 1922, still less of the absolute power he seized in 1925. Mussolini and d'Annunzio were never friends: the one was an efficient, brutal, politically experienced demagogue; the other, though a demagogue, was inefficient, aesthetic, and without knowledge of the politics of the masses. Mussolini was brought up as an extreme socialist, d'Annunzio as a poet. D'Annunzio, however, was much interested in the legend of the Fisher-King — a legend familiar all over Europe in various forms: the legend of Barbarossa, for example, and of King Arthur. But in Italy there was little trace of it until Carducci, learned in other languages, made his famous funeral oration for Garibaldi in 1882. He supposes that Italy will come once again under the domination of the barbarians.

Then the generation of Garibaldi will go down to the shores of the sea and will stretch out their arms, crying: 'Come, return; O General, O Liberator, O Dictator!' And the hero will hear their long cries, and will come once again to raise his native land. And since his generation will be too few he will stand upon the hills of Rome, raising high his sword, and will stamp upon the ground and command that the dead of all his battles come forth. And then the red brigades will scour the peninsula in victory and Italy will be free, all free, in all her mountains, in all her islands, through all her seas. And the Roman eagle will return to spread its wide wings between the sea and the mountains and to cry loud cries of joy before the ships which sail freely over a Mediterranean for the third time Italian.

And when the people has been restored to its ancient rights the hero will disappear — to the councils of the gods of his fatherland, they will say. But every day the sun as it rises over the Alps through the steaming fog of morning and as it sets through the mist of evening will cast among the cedars and larches a great shadow with red garments and golden hair streaming on the wind and eyes as calm as the sky. The stranger shepherd will stand astonished, and will say to his sons: 'It is the hero of Italy, watching over the mountains of his country'.

This speech, said to have been delivered extempore, and taken as a whole certainly unsurpassed in splendour in all the prose of the Italian language, naturally made as great an impression on d'Annunzio as on the rest of his generation. His work abounds in overtones of the Fisher-King; there are messianic and fertilizing rivers, seas, mummies, sins, and harlots. Above all there was the 'Necessary Hero' who would come between trumpets through the shining gates of the sunrise. He certainly had no human politician in mind, though no doubt he was prepared sometimes to see himself in the

role. But when Mussolini came to power the Fascists did not take long to read back his name into verse of d'Annunzio's which had appeared as much as twenty years before. Neither Mussolini nor d'Annunzio thought fit to correct them.

From September 1919 until December 1920 d'Annunzio continued his balcony and banners dictatorship in Fiume. When it began, the government in Rome was in the weak and idealistic hands of Nitti, a liberal intellectual who believed that every political force should be given its head. D'Annunzio's enterprise was, after all, a very remarkable thing; Nitti would not be the man to reduce Italy's greatest poet and dramatist, even if the remarkable enterprise did involve mutiny, the breaking of treaties, and the disintegration of the State. But in 1920 Nitti fell, and Giolitti, now seventy-eight, returned to power for the last time. His attitude to d'Annunzio was very different from that of the government he had dislodged; d'Annunzio had drummed him out of Rome with his 'Radiant May' agitation of 1915. He had been reluctantly put back into power by an exhausted and frightened country and legislature in the belief that no one but this tarnished and experienced old wangler could avert a civil war. Against other agitators, particularly the communists, Giolitti proceeded by charm, bribe and artifice; against Fiume he sent a cruiser. The Legionaries were at first disposed to resist, but after a short bombardment (during which a shell burst against the façade of d'Annunzio's palace) they abandoned the city. It was the end of d'Annunzio's active life.

The significance for Italy of the Fiume enterprise is obvious; it was the beginning of the speciously attractive side of Fascism, of the banners, the oratory, and the pageantry. Many of the Legionaries themselves became Fascists, and d'Annunzio lived on in a villa beside Lake Garda with a stipend from the Fascist Government and as its laureate. Mussolini proclaimed his admiration and presented d'Annunzio with the front half of a small cruiser in which the poet had fought during the War. He set it up in his garden.

For d'Annunzio himself the Fiume enterprise was the culmination of that movement in his character which betrayed itself even in the schoolboy. To act upon and see himself reflected in one woman was not enough; so he wrote his plays. But to act upon and see himself reflected in one theatre-audience was not enough either, and so for a few days in 1915 he had acted upon and seen himself reflected in the Roman mob and through it in the destiny of the Italian nation. It was this process that the Fiume enterprise crowned and ended. With his Legionaries he stormed the heart of Fiume and took both them and the city as both audience and mistress: a final assimilation of life to art.

So, at least, he would have said. But if one judges it by its effects,

it was an irresponsible prank played by an egocentric genius who profited by the dissolution of the Italian state to glorify himself. It strengthened in the Italian people that childish love of noise and colour and self-assertion which led it within five years into the clutch of the despot Mussolini and within twenty into the clutch of the despot Hitler. D'Annunzianism was one of those small mediations by means of which historic situations come into being; it was not the cause of Fascism and its disasters, but it was a substantial tributary which went to swell the torrent and give it its characteristic colour. To his women, d'Annunzio may have brought joy or sorrow. To his readers he brought joy, but joy accompanied often by exasperation. To the Italian people he brought in the end only misery.

JOHN STUART MILL

R. J. WHITE

EVER since John Stuart Mill's death at Avignon in 1873, a kind of mental genuflection has steadily become a habit among intellectual persons at the mention of his name. 'The Saint of Rationalism', Mr Gladstone called him, while at the same time declining to subscribe to a public memorial to him because he had been an advocate of birth-control. No doubt Mr Gladstone's soubriquet was intended to convey to the respectable of later Victorian England that an unbeliever might still be a saint of some kind. It certainly pleased the intellectuals, among whom it had become a fashion to wear their rationalism like the white flower of a blameless life. Mill was one of themselves; indeed, their most respected teacher. Intellectuals are habitually the least respectful of men, and it was — it still is — pleasant to observe their indulgence in a gesture of unconsidered obeisance at the name of Mill. One would not have it otherwise. There may yet be revaluations of Mill, but they will not take the customary form of devaluations. Dr Leavis has seen to that.¹ As for the merely vulgar practice of debunking in the light of a man's unpublished letters, that has been scotched forever by Dr Hayek, whose edition of the Mill-Taylor correspondence² is a model of the scholarly discretion which should go to the presentation of such delicate material. What is required, however, is some inquiry into Mill's qualifications as an intellectual critic and historian, and that is what is attempted here.

Dr Leavis remarks in the introduction which he has written for this long-needed republication of Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge, that his writings have 'an intellectual distinction that is at the same time a distinction of character'. The capacity to assess distinction, moral or intellectual, is given to some more abundantly than to others, but no one who reads in Dr Hayek's volume the documents appertaining to Mill's twenty-eight years' association with Harriet Taylor will doubt that the man underwent a severe enough test to satisfy the canonical requirements of Rome itself. If we cannot say that Mill came through it unscathed, he certainly came through it with undiminished honour. In his letters to Harriet Taylor he often appears priggish and petulant, sometimes vain (as

¹ *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge*, with an Introduction by F. R. Leavis. Chatto and Windus, 7s. 6d. net.

² *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor*, their friendship and subsequent marriage, by F. A. HAYEK. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Harriet observed) with the vanity of the man who prides himself on not being vain, and always as humourless as Herbert Spencer. Portentously solemn about his mission to promote the advance of truth in the world, he could treat his mother and sister with cold disdain as obstacles to the march of mind. Like a good Radical and proto-socialist, he could protest against the existence of one law for the rich and another for the poor, and yet subscribe to the differentiation of moral law between what he and Mrs Taylor were pleased to call 'the higher and the lower natures'. Yet none of these unpleasant characteristics was a product of his association with Harriet Taylor. She re-inforced them, but they were native to the man and to the soil from which he sprang . . . As Carlyle saw it, the whole world might be blooming into everlasting happiness of the greatest number, but the homes of the Utilitarians were Little Hells of improvidence, discord and unreason, where 'human spontaneity has taken refuge in invisible corners'. Reading Dr. Hayek's volume, we often want to kick John Stuart Mill very hard indeed. But we still know that his impoverished heart was, on the whole, in the right place, even if a little too near the head. The toe itches but lies still, and the hand goes (less automatically than before) to the hat.

It was for long the fashion to contrast Mill favourably with Bentham, a fashion which he instituted himself by writing an essay on Bentham which imputed to that benevolent *philosophe* a set of characteristics precisely the opposite of those possessed by himself. It was then supposed that because he could write so critically of his master, he was himself a man of vastly greater breadth and sensibility of mind. Similarly, an enthusiastic essay on Coleridge gained for him a reputation of sympathetic understanding towards thinkers of an opposite cast of mind from his own. He became at once the man who 'modified' Bentham in the light of a more profound psychology and culled from Coleridge the best fruits of a more constructive application of the historical and sociological sciences. This dual character of critic of the Utilitarians and fellow-traveller of the Idealists, was borne out by Mill's own account of his mental history in his *Autobiography*, a self-portrait drawn with such modesty and veracity as to become one of those books which the *illuminati* of intellectual history delight to describe as 'one of the cardinal documents of the nineteenth century'.

And yet, it is only necessary to read Bentham (as distinct from reading the label on the Benthamite bottle as prescribed by Messrs Gradgrind and Bounderby) to realize that of the two minds, Bentham and Mill, that of Bentham was not only by far the more empirical but also by far the less deluded. For example, it took a great deal of doing to persuade Bentham that the progress of civilization was bound up with the approximation of all govern-

ments whatever to the perfected representative government of nineteenth-century England — an assumption which Mill made with scarcely more inquiry than Lord Macaulay. As for Coleridge, there has really been no excuse for nearly a century for anyone to suppose that Mill had got hold of the right end of the stick about him. F. J. A. Hort's 'Coleridge' appeared in *Cambridge Essays* in 1856, only sixteen years after Mill's celebrated essay, and is as superior in its understanding of its subject as (say) Mill's essay was superior to that of Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825). Mill's famous pair of essays, in fact, tell us a lot about Mill, and it is for knowledge of Mill that we should read them. They tell us as much about the defects as about the virtues of his mind as an instrument of contemporary criticism and evaluation. Dr Leavis has dwelt admirably upon the virtues. The defects need yet to be examined.

Bentham, like Hobbes, has suffered among students at second-hand, from the boomerang effects of his own extravagances of language. Bentham's famous assertion that 'all poetry is misrepresentation' is like Hobbes' assertion that imagination 'is nothing but decaying sense.' It is true that Bentham's best-known excursion into poetry runs:

Hail noble Mansfield, first among the just,
The bad man's terror and the good man's trust . . .

while Hobbes limited himself to an autobiography in Latin elegiacs and to a translation of Homer. But it is certainly crass to suppose that because a philosopher decides to delimit his subject-matter to the world of sense or the world of sensation, he neither knows anything nor cares anything for any other world. When Bentham said that push-pin was as good as poetry, he was careful to prefix the remark with the words 'other things being equal', and it is quite clear that he meant that they must be equal in the eye of the legislator as sources of pleasure. To introduce qualitative considerations into a theory of pains and pleasures, and to talk about 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures, simply knocks the bottom out of legislation as Bentham wanted to establish it — that is, as an exact science. The only reason that Bentham adopted pain and pleasure as his standards was his belief that they were subject to something like exact measurement. To get rid of such arbitrary standards as 'natural Law', or whatever the contemporary fashion might be, was the first condition of good government. To have the legislator deciding that one pleasure is 'higher' than another, would be to admit the despotism of subjective standards all over again. To be told by our governors what is 'good' for us (because, in their opinion, somehow 'higher'), and to be made to accept it, would be to fall back into the condition of benevolent, or

enlightened, despotism, from which Bentham's sympathies departed quite early, or to set out in the direction of a welfare-state towards which he refused — in the interests of liberty — to travel.

Mill never seems to have seen this with any sort of clarity. He was so anxious to deplore Bentham's exclusive concern for what he calls 'the merely *business* part of the social arrangements', and to include considerations of quality in the concerns of government, that he let himself in for a train of argument that could only end in the complete overthrow of the Benthamic concept of government as a device concerned with the externalities of life. When, largely as the result of his association with Harriet Taylor, he found himself dogged by the over-neighbouring state with all its apparatus of moral attitudes and conventions, he bolted back to Bentham with his *Essay on Liberty*. He could be contented neither with what he imagined to be the Benthamic *laissez-faire* state of pleasure-pain animals, nor with what he conceived to be the Coleridgian alternative in the shape of an intuitive psychology within a framework of *étatisme*, or Socialism. As a result, he spent his days in dithering between a pair of supposedly repellent opposites. When sickened by the Benthamic spectre of *laissez-faire* selfishness and hedonism, he played down Bentham and cried up Coleridge. When scared by the turnip-ghost of a Leviathan-state, he harked back to the Benthamic distinction between law and morality in terms of a barren distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding action. Carlyle fostered the first, and Harriet Taylor the second, illusion.

Not that Mill supposed that these two opposites were mutually exclusive. True, he oversharpened the differences between Bentham and Coleridge, and he sometimes mistook their nature. There is no question of one being a believer in the test of utility while the other maintains the test of prescriptive right. Coleridge was, in his way, as great a utilitarian as Bentham, and every bit as radical in his mode of inquiry. The essential difference between them is the difference between the man who takes social institutions as so many pieces of furniture that can be moved around, re-arranged, refashioned, or even chopped up for firewood, and the man who sees them as elements in the total concrete experience of a people — not as the furniture of life, but as life itself. The difference must be referred, as Coleridge himself put it, to the difference between a dead and a living nature, a difference in philosophy, or the difference between philosophy and no philosophy. Mill had no inkling of the nature of Coleridge's philosophy. He thought it was 'intuitive', 'transcendental', and, of course, German. At the same time, he was so dissatisfied with Bentham's philosophy that he rightly insisted that he was not a philosopher at all. Instead, he described him as a reformer in philosophy, the man who applied a new method. This, again, is

unfounded. Bentham's method was at least as old as the thirteenth century. It was the sheerest nominalism. The charge against him is not that he was a nominalist: for the work he had to do, nominalism was essential. The charge against Bentham is that he was totally unaware that any other philosophy, or philosophic method, existed or — at any rate — had any right to exist.

Mill's Bentham is, in fact, a caricature. He took the elderly sage of Queen Square Place (the only Bentham he had ever known) for the whole man, and made him into a legend which was to impose itself upon the public mind for a century. 'The queer old gentleman', the music-hall 'philosopher' with his quaint habits and his innocence of the rough world, owes most to Hazlitt, but Mill gave to the caricature the additional prestige of intellectual support. Bentham the man of the world, the friend of Shelburne, the traveller, and even the lover, was literally beyond his ken. A glance at the portrait of the man, which now hangs in University College, London, comes as a shock to those nourished on the stock portrait of the elderly anchorite of Westminster. One might as well base one's notions of Hobbes on De Quincey's 'Murder as a Fine Art'. What excuse had Mill, apart from the fact that he knew Bentham only as an old man? It is inconceivable that he had not carefully studied 'The Theory of Legislation'. Yet, is it possible, after reading Chapter IX of that work, on 'Circumstances which affect Sensibility', to suppose that Bentham thought 'Man, that most complex being, . . . a very simple one'? Or that his view of human nature was unaffected by personal experience of the average human joys and sorrows? The answer must be that Mill read his Bentham through a glass darkly, or through the distorting-mirror supplied by his father, of whom Lord Macaulay justly observed that, by the time he had done expounding Bentham's principles, the master himself was very unlikely to recognize them.

Mill's misapprehension in the case of Coleridge is superficially less, but fundamentally more, serious. He understood what Coleridge had to say on the concrete problems of his day, and he grasped the fundamental liberalism of his spirit. In the *Autobiography* he records that he first encountered 'the Coleridgians' as 'a second Liberal and even Radical party, on totally different grounds from Benthamism . . .' What those grounds were, however, he failed to understand because he mistook both the origin and nature of the underlying philosophy. Mill imagined that in making up his mind about Coleridge he was faced with a conflict between sensationalism and transcendentalism, between those who proclaimed with Locke 'that all knowledge consists of generalisations from experience', and those who held with 'the German philosophers since Kant' that the human mind 'possesses a capacity, within certain limits, of per-

ceiving the nature and properties of 'Things in themselves', and that truths can be 'known *a priori*, by occasion of experience, but are not themselves the subjects of experience'. Mill is extremely cautious in his account of the nature of this 'transcendental' philosophy, which he rejects, and as a brief account of a large and difficult subject this passage in the essay on Coleridge has never been rivalled. The only difficulty is that it was not the philosophy of Coleridge. To lump Coleridge with the 'German philosophers since Kant' and to christen the whole thing 'Germano-Coleridgian' might well be described as a perversion if we did not know that in matters of the mind Mill was as incapable of being perverse as he was incapable of lying. The fact is that he had not gone to the only available sources of Coleridge's philosophy that could have told him anything useful about it: the *First Lay Sermon*, or *The Statesman's Manual* (1816) and chapters IX and XII of *Biographia Literaria* (1817). Neither of these indispensable documents is referred to in Mill's essay. He must have seen the *First Lay Sermon*, for he frequently quotes from the *Second Lay Sermon* which was generally bound up in the same volume. But it was hardly to be supposed that even a schismatic Benthamite would spend much time on a work bearing the sub-title: 'The Bible the best guide to Political skill and Foresight.' As for *Biographia Literaria*, why should he, or anyone else, have imagined that the secrets of a poet's philosophy were to be discovered in a work devoted to his 'Literary life and opinions'? And yet, the answer to the question why Hort, only sixteen years later, could arrive at the truth about Coleridge's philosophy lies simply in the fact that he had studied the whole of Coleridge with a mind unrestricted by the basic Utilitarian assumption that certain fields of inquiry, notably those lying under the head of Theology, were not worth the exploration of an enlightened mind.

Mill, with his dialectical theory of truth, could see that somehow there had to be a conjunction between Coleridge and Bentham if advance were to be possible. He could see that they were allies, and that 'whoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of their age'. Yet he could not penetrate either to the basis of their differences or to the essence of their likeness. His failure must be attributed both to a radical limitation in his mind and to the nature of his education. For all his remarkable powers of intelligence and of sympathy, he lacked the integrating power of genius which apprehends the inner unity underlying outward disparities. This power is at all times rare and it is especially rare among men of severely intellectual disposition and training such as Mill. Goethe had it, and Coleridge, and — to a lesser degree — Humphrey Davy and Carlyle. Mill not only lacked it in himself but was radically incapable of perceiving it in

others. Like the overblown intellectual that he was, he thought that the problem of synthesis was one of quantity. Modern thinkers, he affirmed, 'have vastly more material to reduce to order than the ancients dreamt of, and the secret of harmonizing it all has not yet been discovered'. The remark was *a propos* of Goethe, who 'could never succeed in putting symmetry into any of his own writings, except very short ones . . .' Mill's very phraseology betrays him. Synthesis was something to be 'put into' material. 'Harmonizing' was something to be imposed upon material. The idea that the principle of unity and harmony might already exist within the material, that it is the 'Thinker's' privilege to educe an order from phenomena rather than his right to impose an order upon it, was concealed from him. Fundamentally, the attitude of Mill was that of the *philosophes*, a case of *hubris*, or of cosmic impiety. Mill was like the lady who informed Carlyle that she 'accepted the universe' and of whom that cosmic pietist remarked: 'Gad, she'd better.' Men like Coleridge, Goethe and Carlyle are not only incapable of 'putting symmetry into' the universe of mind and matter. They are incapable of thinking about the universe in that way. They prefer to think, with Coleridge, that life and the universe are 'a lightsome chaos on which the Spirit of God is moving'. Their task is to apprehend the inner principles which inform the seeming chaos of things, and the mere size of that chaos, whether it is a dew-drop or the solar system, makes no difference one way or the other.

To be 'eternally pursuing the likenesses' of things, while nevertheless perceiving their differences; to feel intensely 'the omnipresence of all in each, platonically speaking'; this, Coleridge once observed, was the primary characteristic of his 'brain-marrow'. Mill trained himself to look for likenesses, to appreciate the truth in opposites, but everything in his training and early experience encouraged him towards the contrary tendency. Not only was there the famous 'bifurcatory' method of Bentham, and of his father; there was the omnipresent cult of difference which pervaded the Mill household and Utilitarian society in general. The Utilitarians, and especially the Mills, were very conscious of not being as other men are. They jealously cherished their mental superiority to the larger English society of their day. Neither John Stuart Mill nor any of his brothers and sisters, were sent to school or university. The schools and universities were not good enough for them. They sat round the drawing-room table in Rodney Terrace or Queen Square, while James Mill wrote his acrid articles for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and by a process of domestic monitorialism the wisdom of Jeremy Bentham filtered down to them. When it was suggested that the brilliant young John should go to Cambridge, his father replied that John already knew everything that Cambridge could teach him. If

we accept James Mill's peculiarly narrow notions of what young men need to learn, this was probably true. When, at the age of fourteen, John went to spend a few months in the household of Sir Samuel Bentham in the south of France, his father took him for a walk in Hyde Park and warned him that he would find that other youths of his age were not as he was, their not having had the advantage of being educated by James Mill.

It says a great deal for the natural decency of John Mill's character that the consequence of all this was not a swelled head, but it did have the unfortunate consequence that he grew up in almost complete isolation from the traditional social institutions of his country. One of these institutions was God. Mill later described himself as 'one of the very few examples, in this country, of one who has, not thrown off religious belief, but never had it: I grew up in a negative state with regard to it.' The fact that there was no God was a family secret which the Mills contrived to allow the rest of the world to overhear without exciting either its alarm or its social reprobation. John Mill was to be greatly troubled in later life, not by the agnosticism of his education, but by his ignorance of a large part of the intellectual history of the western world. The defects of his education were not, as is sometimes imagined, the defects of undue cramming at an early age (Mill strenuously denied that he was crammed), but of alienation from some of the most important ideas and organs of centrality. The Bible, the Church of England, the ancient Universities and grammar-schools, the parsonage, the country-house, — all these things which have played so large a part in making and embodying the national tradition, were for many years outside his ken. His misfortune was greater than that of the Protestant Non-conformists with whom the Utilitarians often made common cause in the work of reform. The Non-conformists had the Bible in their blood; to the Utilitarians it was a closed book — a book that had never been opened.³ The Non-conformists knew the Church of England, if only as Fox and Bunyan and Wesley knew it, by its oppression; the Utilitarians knew it through the pages of the *Westminster Review* as a sinister interest, or the praying section of the Tory Party. The general body of English society felt the whole weight of the social hierarchy in its activity or inactivity, whether at Westminster or at Quarter Sessions; the Utilitarians knew all about rotten and pocket boroughs, Squire Western, and the Black Book of the Church. But the most serious lacuna in Mill's experience was on the strictly intellectual plane. He knew scarcely anything of the English philosophy of Christian liberty. He

³ Bentham, suffering from eye-strain and forbidden to read small print, found a large-type version of the Bible a solace from boredom. He wrote a pamphlet about it, *Not Paul, but Jesus*.

might have got on fairly well without the Black Book of the Church, but he could not get anywhere at all without the Cambridge Platonists.

It is an unhappy fact that the English Utilitarians short-circuited the whole of English Christian philosophy since the middle of the seventeenth century. They allowed themselves to fall victims to the illusion that the only respectable line of philosophy since Hobbes and Locke ran through France and Scotland, through Hume and Adam Smith, through Condillac and La Mettrie, down to Bentham: anywhere, in fact, except through England. When John Mill discovered that Coleridge possessed an alternative philosophy, he at once assumed that it must be German. He could see and admit that the descent of Locke's philosophy through France had led to 'the shallowest set of doctrines which perhaps were ever passed off upon a cultivated age . . .' He could see that things had gone sadly astray in Scotland with Reid and Stewart. But when he was faced with a thinker of the magnitude of Coleridge, it never occurred to him to look for his line of intellectual descent in England. When in doubt, call it German, seems to have been his maxim. So, 'Germano-Coleridgian' was the label he affixed to the greatest descendant of the English liberal Christian tradition, the intellectual heir of Milton and Sidney, Cudworth and Whichcote, at the same time placing the author of *The Statesman's Manual* in the historiographical school of Herder and Michelet. This is what makes his essay on Coleridge worthless for the understanding of the nature of Coleridge's thought, while at the same time it makes it immensely revealing of the mind of Mill.

Harriet Taylor fortified all the worst aspects of Mill's mind as decisively as Carlyle had fortified the best. More decisively, indeed, because her influence waxed as Carlyle's waned, until in the end she exercised over him an almost undisputed domination. The last and worst thing that Mill needed, if he were to become a creative interpreter of his age to itself, was the dry dogmatism of this *philosophe* in petticoats. Nowhere, in all the documents now made available to us, do we detect any other warmth of feeling in Harriet Taylor than the chronic indignation generated by a sense of intellectual and moral superiority. She instinctively imputed base motives to anyone with whose opinions she disagreed. She was always being 'disgusted' or made to feel sick, like a sixth-form school-girl who has just discovered that her elders and betters are less emancipated and enlightened than herself. Fools, imbeciles, selfish and place-seeking animals, 'intense and disgusting vulgarity', — all these abound in her letters on the politics of the day. There is only one man in England with a mind and feeling, and he is John Mill. And for John Mill, there is only one person living who is worthy to live, and

she is Harriet Taylor. They go round and round, in these pitiful letters, like twin marionettes in a highly exclusive mutual admiration society, bitterly lamenting the folly and imbecility of the rest of the human race. It is a painful spectacle, and perhaps one which it were better that we should not have been allowed to see. We had always suspected that Harriet Taylor was a menace, but we had been able hitherto to cherish the hope that the well-known exordium in Mill's *Autobiography* was tinged with the rosy light of valedictory licence. We know now that it was not, and that if John Mill could have composed his own epitaph it would have been exactly like that of Mrs. Sapsea, only with John Stuart Mill occupying the place of Ethelinda. 'I should like everyone to know', he once told her, 'that I am the Dumont and you the originating mind, the Bentham, bless her.'

If it be objected that we should respect Mill's own assessment of his intellectual and spiritual debt to Harriet Taylor, the answer must be that this volume makes it impossible. Nor is it any longer possible to argue that we have too little evidence upon which to judge the concrete nature of her contribution to a collaborative effort. There are here plenty of examples of Harriet Taylor's criticism of what Mill wrote, and of the suggestions that she made for additional chapters, sections and paragraphs. All the evidence points to a deplorable re-inforcement of the barren elements of his eighteenth-century inheritance. Dr Hayek refers us, with proper caution, to a psychological interpretation of Mill's celebrated mental crisis of 1826, in terms of 'repressed death wishes against his father'. Without subscribing to this rather lurid theory, we may still ask ourselves whether Mill may not have found in Mrs Taylor an attractive way of appeasing the ghost of James Mill and at the same time compensating for the loss of the one person upon whom, in the formative years of his life, he had felt utter reliance. There are times when Harriet Taylor strikes us as the re-incarnation of that incorrigible old dogmatist. John Mill's craving for her physical presence — a craving which led him to take a house within sight of the cemetery at Avignon after her death, and then to transfer his idolatry to her daughter, Helen, — often suggests the propitiatory rites of a parricide. When we observe that practically everything (so far as these letters tell us) that Harriet Taylor contributed to Mill's mental history was calculated to drive him back upon the arid radicalism of the Enlightenment, and away from the course that his mind had taken under the influence of Coleridge and Carlyle, we can almost see James Mill nod his saturnine head with belated approval among the shades.

Examination of the essays on Bentham and Coleridge in the light of the work that has been done in recent years by such scholars as

C. W. Everett and the late J. H. Muirhead,¹ must inevitably lead us to the conclusion that Mill was inadequately equipped to make a lasting contribution to our understanding of the essential quality of these two great seminal minds of the nineteenth century. We should respect his powers of perception in detecting their dialectical significance, and the high powers of intelligence that he brought to bear within the limitations of his understanding. Dr Leavis is more than justified in upholding the classic quality of these works, and in insisting upon their central relevance to our understanding of Mill, — and thereby of the Victorian age. It has been our purpose here to do something which was not within Dr Leavis' intention. His interest is in Mill. Something else, however, needed to be done in the interests of Bentham and Coleridge. If, in attempting to do it, we have been obliged to show Mill as rather smaller than the men about whom he wrote, we may be sure that the perspective is one in which every genuine critic — and Mill most of all — will rest content when confronted with the creative powers of men of original genius.

¹ See especially: C. W. EVERETT, *The Education of Jeremy Bentham* (New York, 1931), and J. H. MUIRHEAD, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy, and Coleridge as Philosopher* (London, 1931 and 1930 respectively).

A NEW READING OF 'CHRISTABEL'

EDGAR JONES

1

THE latest work on *Christabel*,¹ while 'a study of the History, Background, and Purposes of Coleridge's *Christabel*', makes no claim to dogmatize on conclusions. Coleridge has, as Nethercot sees it, 'dotted in so many points in his design (of *Christabel*) that it is hard to resist drawing the connecting lines in order to see what sort of picture may result. Moreover, the process is not exactly like the scientific one of reconstructing, let us say, the pterodactyl from the lucky recovery of a single wing-finger. It is more of an *expede Herculeum* affair — or the sketching of a unicorn from a shard of hoof, a shoulder blade, and a piece of corkscrewed horn.'

Now, it is my opinion that far more than fragmentary scraps of interior evidence exist which undeniably point the way to a new interpretation of the poem. Some have been noted before, and a few many times; some have been entirely overlooked. They, and the conclusions reached, in no way invalidate Nethercot's scholarly research into Coleridge's reading both before and during the time of composition of *Christabel*; what they do, however, is to sketch a design essentially different from his.

The main avenue of Nethercot's research leads to the goal of Geraldine; quite rightly, of course, as she is the central mystery in the poem. And the Geraldine he has succeeded in synthesizing out of the mass of Coleridge's reading, particularly of the 1790s, is quite a new one in Coleridgean criticism. She is also a very complex one. As Livingston Lowes has shown the character of the Ancient Mariner to be composite of associations of the Wandering Jew, Cain, Reginald Falkenberg the Flying Dutchman, and actual mariners known to Coleridge through his reading;² so Nethercot has, by similar methods, constructed a Geraldine in whom are to be found associations of the vampire, the lamia, and the snake, coupled with characteristics of other beings known to divers philosophies. She is summed up . . . 'the brand of some undivulged sin in her past disfigures her body ineffaceably, to her shame and disgust. She seems, likewise, to be under the control of some spirit power from the other world, and has a mission to carry out, though she is apparently not completely reconciled to it herself. She is demon, witch, snake, vampire, and appealing woman by turns and sometimes at the same moment.'

¹ A. H. NETHERCOT: *The Road to Tryermaine*, 1939.

² J. LIVINGSTON LOWES: *The Road to Xanadu*, 1927.

I would suggest, first, that a Geraldine of such complexity is contrary to the spirit of simplicity characteristic of Coleridge in his best poems. Further, a synthesis of such widely different elements into the character of Geraldine would present a problem of extraordinary difficulty, and while Coleridge was undoubtedly capable of such a synthesis, the artistic problem would remain. The narrative, in its later stages, could scarcely be kept above the level of horrific Gothic literature criticized so often and so stringently by him, for instance in his letter to W. L. Bowles of March 1787: 'Indeed, I am most weary of the terrible, having been an hireling in the Critical Review for these last six or eight months. I have lately been reviewing the Monk, the Italian, Hubert de Sevrac, & etc., & etc.; in all of which dungeons, and old castles, and solitary Houses by the Seaside, and Caverns, and Woods, and extraordinary characters, and all the tribe of Horror and Mystery, have crowded on me — even to surfeiting'.

'Extraordinary characters' — a Geraldine of this sort would be a very extraordinary character indeed; and chief of all the tribe of Horror stands, by common consent, the vampire. Neither would such a character accord with the statement of Coleridge's intention in the *Lyrical Ballads* that his efforts 'should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith'.

Professor Lowes has shown that the ways of the shaping spirit of Coleridge's imagination have been similar in both the fashioning of the great design with its clear lines, and in the achievement of the simplicity of its diction which (in the *Ancient Mariner*) 'leaves the impression of a *keeping* almost flawless in its integrity, a pervasive simplicity and clarity'. And: 'the words are inseparable from the images, and the images from the words, and both, in their indissoluble union, from the design. It is more than diction which is all of a piece. It is the *poem*.'

We should look, then, for a Geraldine and an interpretation of *Christabel* which are in accord with this simplicity; and that same 'pervasive simplicity and clarity' of diction is as noticeable in *Christabel* as it is in the *Ancient Mariner*.

'I learned from him (Boyer)', says Coleridge 'that Poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes.' The Poetic Logic in *Christabel* unfolds itself with the inevitability found only in the great poem, with the complete

adequacy of part to part. But there is no need to begin at the beginning. Let us look first at the following passage:

The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.
(I. 129 fol.)

This is one of the climaxes of the poem, and is the first of the two climaxes in Part 1. Nethercot has noticed the eagerness of Geraldine to establish physical contact with Christabel. At the beginning of her first speech she begs Christabel: 'Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear.' She ends this speech with a reiteration of the plea: 'Stretch forth thy hand.' There is more to this lifting over the threshold, however, than a mere renewal of physical contact. Christabel *must* carry Geraldine over the threshold, and for this to take place Geraldine simulates weakness. The word 'belike' in this context has the same faintly satiric connotation of 'bemocked' in the *Ancient Mariner*:

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread.

Once across the threshold Geraldine rises again and walks 'as she were not in pain'. To say that Christabel must be the means of introduction of Geraldine into the house if the evil is to work does not explain such a determinate act as this. Christabel would be the means of Geraldine's introduction if the touch of her hand alone guided her in. The very carrying over the threshold is symbolic, as I shall show. Once past the threshold and in the safety of the court:

And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas, said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
(I. 137 fol.)

Geraldine is either a force of evil or an instrument of evil and cannot pray. What she is we do not yet know, but we are finding out, slowly and yet surely. This is the first indication we are given of the evil either that is Geraldine or is possessing her.

But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;

(I. 158-9)

This, together with the 'angry moan' (148) of the mastiff bitch adds to our knowledge that Geraldine is evil the further knowledge that with her we are in the presence of something supernatural. And the evil that, so far, we only know is present yet cannot put a name to or place, is with consummate skill brought again before our attention:

a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche by the wall.

(I. 159 fol.)

The eye is seen, glittering in that fit of flame; and what kind of eye it is is told us by implication, for the only other thing Christabel sees is the boss. Two things — rounded, cold, metallic, inhuman.

In l. 198 the second important clue to the meaning is given us, the first being the carrying over the threshold. Christabel gives a piece of information about her mother that has been accepted by many critics as valuable, but used only as an aid in forecasting a likely ending Coleridge had in mind for the poem; a happy ending following the return of Christabel's lover, in which the appearance of her mother signaled her daughter's wedding-day.

I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.

(I. 198 fol.)

Now, look at the first line:

'Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock,

And further, to Geraldine's first speech to Christabel:

I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.

(I. 100-1)

The clock and the castle bell appear to be one and the same, or at least the terms are interchangeable. The reference 'the castle bell strike twelve' bears out this synonymous use, for a bell, *qua* bell, does not strike. Twelve, then, had struck; and the significant thing is that the mother does indeed appear, as Geraldine, if no one else, can see:

But soon with altered voice, said she —
 'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
 I have power to bid thee flee!
 Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
 Why stares she with unsettled eye?
 Can she the bodiless dead espy?
 And why with hollow voice cries she,
 'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine —
 Though thou her guardian spirit be,
 Off, woman, off, 'tis given to me.'

(I. 204 fol.)

The castle bell has struck twelve, the mother has heard it as she could not fail to have done, and has come to her daughter's side; the symbolic action of the carrying over the threshold — all meet here. The interpretation is a matter only of seeing that these points form a simple and logical design.

The carrying over the threshold is a familiar symbolic action, that of the bridegroom with the bride. And, the positions reversed, that is what happens here. Christabel is the bride, and the unnaturalness of this bridal is stressed in the reversal of position, for it is Christabel who carries, instead of being carried, over the threshold into the castle where we find her own virgin's chamber is her bride-bed. Her mother has heard the bell strike twelve and has come as promised; but there is something stronger than the power of goodness and the protector of goodness together abroad tonight. Geraldine is the fearful bridegroom, and this hour is hers.

It is significant, too, that Christabel's reason for being in the wood at such a time (no stranger place or time) is that she has fears for her lover:

She had dreams all yesternight
 Of her own betrothed knight;
 And she in the midnight wood will pray
 For the weal of her lover that's far away.

(I. 27-30)

while in the first edition appeared the two following lines, excised later:

Dreams, that made her moan and leap,
 As on her bed she lay in sleep.

It is an anticipation of his supplanting and loss.

But as yet we have not the full story. Geraldine is part of the supernatural world, we have already been told implicitly, and that she is perfectly familiar with that world we are told explicitly later:

All they who live in the upper sky,
 Do love you, holy Christabel!
 And you love them, and for their sake
 And for the good which me befel,
 Even I in my degree will try,
 Fair maiden, to requite you well.

(I. 227 fol.)

If, as has been suggested, Geraldine is a vampire and lamia, or a thing of evil intent on the destruction of Christabel's good, the last three and a half lines are unnecessary hypocrisy. If the present thesis holds — and we shall return to these lines — they are charged with meaning.

First, however, there is a purposely vague picture of physical desecration, actual physical horror:

and full in view
 Behold! her bosom and half her side —
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel.

(I. 251 fol.)

All but one of the variants of I. 254 (that one a correction in the copy of the First Edition presented to David Hinves, and not in Coleridge's handwriting) follow the general reading: 'And she is to sleep with Christabel.'

It is a desecration that has been found difficult to explain unless some explanation similar to that given by Nethercot, that of the 'Witch's mark', is adopted. Yet, I think, there is another and simpler explanation, which is borne out by the text.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast.

(I. 245 fol.)

It is a disfigurement that she bares with shame and after an inner struggle. Christabel remembers it a 'bosom old' and a 'bosom cold'. It is, indeed, just such a disfigurement as would appear if an evil spirit or demon possessed a living, in this case a beautiful, woman.

Josephus, the 'learned Jew' of the prose gloss to the *Ancient Mariner*, and one of Coleridge's favourite authors, is quoted by Cudworth in *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* on the subject of demoniac possession: 'Josephus declares it as his opinion, concerning the Demons or Devils, that they were the Spirits or

Souls of wicked men deceased, getting into the Bodies of the Living.' And again: '... Evil Spirits or Demons, do sometimes really Act upon Bodies of men, and either inflict or Augment bodily Distempers and Diseases.' And Coleridge, as Kaufman shows,¹ had drawn the book twice from the Bristol Library, in 1795 and 1796. Or, alternatively, it is just the sort of blemish as would remain on the disintegrating body if an evil spirit or demon possessed the corpse of Sir Roland's daughter. Professor Lowes has shown how thoroughly acquainted through his reading Coleridge was with the revenant, and the use he made of the revenant in the *Ancient Mariner* is sufficient testimony.

Demoniac possession of either a living or a dead Geraldine, daughter of Sir Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine, seems, I would say, the explanation of this characteristic of the 'lovely lady'.

In the person of Geraldine, then, we see the demon-lover who, for her hour, makes Christabel her own. And now the ambiguities in her character, the difficulties encountered in one's reading of the text, settle into their comfortable rests. Geraldine's physical deformity has been explained. Her scheme is apparent in the lover's shame in his blemish. Her recoil from her own impending desecration of Christabel is rooted in the antipathetic impulses of the demon-lover. He is driven by his desire and the undisciplined Appetite of his Demon kind to possess and enjoy; and at the same time the lover in him sets the chastity and the weal of Christabel above the satisfaction of desire.

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay
Then suddenly, as one defied.
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the Maiden's side! —
And in her arms the maid she took.

(I. 255 fol.)

Clustered here are the first appellations of 'maid' and 'Maiden' to Christabel, and they are significantly placed. Significant, too, is the word 'lord', unusual with this connotation, in Geraldine's announcement to Christabel of the power of her bosom's spell:

In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel.

(I. 267-8)

¹ PAUL KAUFMAN. The Reading of Southey and Coleridge. *Mod. Phil.*, XXL (Feb., 1924).

And now those seemingly hypocritical lines quoted above (ll. 227-232) settle comfortably into place with the rest. There is no question of harm in the sense of physical destruction or vampiric embrace, threatened by Geraldine. It is, indeed, an apologetic and faintly bitter little speech, with the stress on the humility of:

Even I in my degree will try.

(I. 231)

Even he, the demon-lover possessing the body of Geraldine, in his kind, in his degree, of demon-lover, will try to requite his mistress well — according to the lights of his degree. If the lover of Christabel looks at her, later, with 'somewhat of malice and more of dread', it is the look of one upon another who, however unwittingly and unwillingly, has been the means of furthering his tread into the dark ways of most terrible sin.

Christabel's experience is one of shame as well as of sorrow:

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is —
O sorrow and shame!

(I. 292 fol.)

Her experience has been such, she has lain with her lover, has known this night the mark of his shame, the seal of his sorrow; and will bear that mark and seal about with her in the days to come. By that word 'seal' we know that she is as much bound her demon-lover's as if her finger were hemmed with his wedding-ring. And Geraldine, the worker of these harms, Christabel's demon-lover in the form of a lady 'surpassing fair', his purpose accomplished, after the unnatural consummation now

Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

(I. 300-1)

The sexual embrace of

And in her arms the maid she took,

(I. 263)

and of

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.

(I. 302-4)

has given way to a mother-child embrace. A star, Christabel's innocence, has set. A star, another and a different Christabel, has

risen. Geraldine has had her hour; and it is a victory that sets nature to silence.

O Geraldine! one hour was thine —
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.

(I. 305-7)

As Geraldine sinks to mild and exhausted sleep, the spirit of evil propitiated, the night-birds sing again; indeed, they are jubilant, with an excitement the greater for the emotional relief after the darkness which, as it were, had for that hour covered the earth.

And Christabel's experience, the bridal embrace with her demon-lover, was compounded of joy as well as of sorrow and shame.

Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds —
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep.

(I. 313 fol.)

It is a dichotomy referred to again later:

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light.

(II. 126 fol.)

In the morning, faced with the Geraldine of the wood, not of the chamber, Christabel doubts the validity of what appears now, under the double spell cast by Geraldine and cold daylight, an unreal experience, and she could never be more explicit about the nature of her experience:

Sure I have sinned! said Christabel,
Now heaven be praised if all be well!

(II. 50-2)

and that sense of her sin is part of what she must carry with her, as Geraldine foretold:

and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown . . .

(II. 57-8)

We know, however, that the sin is not hers, and that she is in no way responsible for her experience. Unlike Geraldine, she finds no difficulty in praying; prayer comes as naturally as speech to her lips. To the Divine Authority she is as spotless, as maiden, as before her demon-lover's visitation.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs . . . (II. 56-7)

Moreover, we must not do Coleridge the injustice of interpreting this as purely a sexual experience and nothing more.

This, then, is the pattern of *Christabel*. Two other references, previously demanding complex explanation, are now self-explanatory. The embrace of the snake and the dove in Bracy's dream accords perfectly with the sexual nature of Geraldine's embrace of Christabel in the fact.

I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck,
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers.

(II. 218 fol.)

There is no suggestion of the destructive embrace of the vampire or the lamia. The symbols themselves present no difficulty. The dove has always been regarded as the symbol of purity as the snake that of evil.

Further, it is the evil possessing the body of Geraldine, and symbolized as the snake, that looks out undisguisable through Geraldine's eyes.

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy;
And the lady's eyes they shrink in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye.

(II. 253-5)

There is no evidence that Geraldine is snake *qua* snake, as Nethercot suggests, a hazardous complication. The episode is wholly symbolic.

Christabel's hissing, far from being an assuming of one of the properties of a supposed serpent-woman, can be explained by a reference, some lines later, quite satisfactorily and in keeping with psychological knowledge of imitation possessed before Coleridge's

time. Christabel, moreover, is in a trance, and the controlling influence is the powerful one of Geraldine:

So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!

(II. 271 fol.)

Further, Coleridge was well acquainted with Mesmer and his theories,¹ in whom contemporary interest was very great, and had even planned to write a book on animal magnetism. The *Ancient Mariner* again testifies to his interest in the subject at this time. The text is sufficiently explanatory.

Finally, in the matter of interpretation of *Christabel*, it must be pointed out that the demon-lover must have been certainly very much in Coleridge's mind in the early summer of 1798, the time of Coleridge's visit to the farm house 'between Linton and Porlock', for the dream-poem, *Kubla Khan*, is certain authority:

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

Professor Lowes, while explaining the source of every other main reference in *Kubla Khan* has no word to say about this. And that these two figures of a woman wailing for her demon-lover appear here in a dream-poem, where they are totally detached from their surroundings, which all have their origins in the books of travel read by Coleridge about this period, is of the utmost significance. The first canto of *Christabel* was written, most probably, in 1797, and was certainly finished by the early summer of 1798. Here he stopped writing; the poetic frenzy had, indeed, departed. But the matter must have been well in his mind.

'With this view (to procure that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith) I wrote the *Ancient Mariner* and was preparing among other poems *The Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which I should more nearly have realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt.'²

I think it is safe to suppose (having in mind what we already know) that it is Coleridge's preoccupation with a poem he thought of so highly and was unhappily unable to continue, which explains this otherwise unexplained reference in *Kubla Khan*. A poem in which,

¹ PROF. LANE COOPER. *The Power of the Eye in Coleridge (Studies in Lang. and Lit. in Celebration of the Seventieth Birthday of James Morgan Hart. 1910).*

² *Biographia Literaria*. II. 6.

as Professor Lowes has shown us, 'all checks are off', a poem in which the dream was 'the unchecked subliminal flow of blending images, and the dreamer merely the detached and unsolicitous spectator'.

2

Why did Coleridge never finish *Christabel*? John Wilson, writing in Blackwood's in 1836 a criticism of Martin Farquar Tupper's *Geraldine*, approached very close to the answer.

Coleridge's *Christabel* is the most exquisite of all his inspirations; and, incomplete as it is, affects the imagination more magically than any other poem concerning the preternatural...

Coleridge *could* not complete *Christabel*. The idea of the poem, no doubt, dwelt always in his imagination — but the poet knew that power was not given him to robe it in words. The Written rose up between him and the Unwritten; and seeing that it was 'beautiful exceedingly', his soul was satisfied, and shunned the labour — though a labour of love — of a new creation.

Part II of *Christabel* was written some years after Part I. 'The second part [was written], says Coleridge, after my return from Germany, in the year 1800 at Keswick, Cumberland' — and this statement is borne out by considerable other evidence. The second part is, in a sense, a new creation. The first poetic frenzy had died with the completion of the first part, and this part is flawless. Part II, though 'beautiful exceedingly', shows a slight, and — considering the time-elapse — surely inevitable falling-off.

First, the magic and mystery, by moonlight so 'satisfactory', to borrow Mr. Eliot's term, loses something in its emergence into the more searching light of day. Christabel's experience with Geraldine in this light seems, not only to Christabel, but to us as well to have taken place, if at all, in another world. If Christabel can question the validity of her experience, how much more reason have we

With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

Sir Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine is more than a name to us now after we have been told so fully of the broken friendship between him and Sir Leoline. From a shadowy being, a name and no more, as shadowy as Christabel's lover, he, too, has become one of the *dramatis personae*. He has become a very real link with the world outside. And the world of actuality is with us inside, too, has encroached on the magic and mystery in the trappings of feudalism, the 'trump and solemn heraldry', the 'tourney-court', the 'numerous

array' which will do honour to the daughter of Sir Leoline's friend; in the decisive action itself of sending Bard Bracy and his harp-bearer to the castle of Tryermaine.

Secondly, the fairy-tale anonymity of Part I gives place to a definite localization, with a resulting loss. Familiar place-names of the Lake District, Bratha Head, Wyndermere, Langdale Pike and Borodale set the scene, and a reading of Hutchinson's *History of the County of Cumberland* provided Coleridge with Halebargh Wood and Knorren Moor, 'place-names which none but inquisitors or surveyors would have in remembrance'. 'Irthing flood' is still the Irthing River. Tryermaine (found in Hutchinson as Tradermayne Castle), of sufficient anonymity to be found anywhere, is later localized:

that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.
(II. 166-7)

Thirdly, supernatural machinery extraneous to the story, and only present to add to the 'atmosphere', weakens this second Part. Even the mastiff bitch of Part I is an indispensable feature of the story — it is her 'angry moan' which gives the first indication of the supernatural about Geraldine. But the machinery of this creaks, however slightly:

With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.
(II. 21 fol.)

Finally, a glimpse of Coleridge himself is caught through the vestments of the poem in the second Part. It is as difficult not to believe that the lines on sleep

For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep
(II. 144-5)

have not come from the heart as it is not to believe the same of the corresponding passage in the *Ancient Mariner*.

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

Standing alone, to criticize this perfectly legitimate passage in *Christabel* would be an injustice; but through it the already caught-up attention is directed upon and halted at the gnomic passage on friendship, which follows so closely:

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain, etc.

(II. 77 fol.)

lines so dear to Lamb, and to Coleridge too, and accepted as describing the reconciliation between Coleridge and Southey. And the intrusion is a point of weakness.

Coleridge, to whom the poem meant so much, must have been aware of the deficiencies, however slight, in Part II. Lamb had advised him to leave the first Part alone, and many years later told Gillman: 'I was very angry with Coleridge, when I first heard that he had written a second canto, and that he intended to finish it: but when I read the beautiful apostrophe to the two friends it calmed me.' There was a falling-off, and Coleridge's sensitive imagination undoubtedly detected it. To proceed with his plans to complete the *Christabel* would have been to court disaster, to have before him at the conclusion a flawless Canto 1 leading by steady stages of degeneration and decay to a Canto 5, perhaps, which promised to his foreseeing eye to be inspired by Radcliffe or Matthew Gregory Lewis. And as the years went by, and his capacities decayed, and those friendships (with William and Dorothy Wordsworth) which had played their part in his brief period of greatness disintegrated likewise, he knew he could hope for no other ending to his *Christabel*. 'Coleridge *could* not complete *Christabel*.'

His own account of the matter must be accepted. Writing to Thomas Allsop, about 1820, he says: 'I had the whole of the two cantos in my mind before I began it; certainly the first canto is more perfect, has more of the true wild weird spirit than the last.' And again to Allsop, in 1821: 'Of my Poetic Works I would fain finish my *Christabel*.'

And finally, in *Table Talk*, 1833, the year before his death, he observes: 'The reason of my not finishing *Christabel* is not, that I don't know how to do it — for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one.'

THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND REVIEW OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

CHARLES BLOUNT

ENLIGHTENED education is the foundation of international understanding. Propaganda designed to increase national self-esteem or to create international mistrust, fear and even hatred is most effective when combined with or substituted for education. Of all the subjects of the educational curriculum, history is the most deadly weapon in the hand of the propagandist. And it may be of general interest to review recent efforts to improve the situation.

The damage done to international understanding by nationally biased history teaching became a matter of public concern after the first World War. Between 1919 and 1924 identical voluntary associations (Northern Associations) were established in each of the five states of northern Europe (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland). The purpose of these five co-operating associations was to foster understanding, friendship and close co-operation between the peoples of the five Northern Lands. Almost from the moment of their foundation they concerned themselves with history textbooks, each association examining the textbooks of its own country for comment or factual distortion harmful to understanding between the Northern Lands. In 1921 the Danish association proposed that each country should send its textbooks to the other countries for examination and criticism. But this suggestion seemed so revolutionary even to the closely associated Northern Lands that it was not accepted until 1932. Between 1933 and 1935 one hundred and twenty-six history textbooks were exchanged and reviewed by the Northern Associations. These were mostly textbooks already in use; new books were exchanged for criticism while still in proof. This organization has continued to operate (except for the period of the second World War) from 1933 to the present day.

The achievements of other countries in the period 1919 to 1939 cannot compare with the permanent organization set up in the Northern Lands. But significant steps to stop the use of history teaching as a weapon of nationalist propaganda were taken in France and Germany. In France the *Syndicat National des Instituteurs* examined all French history textbooks, and in 1926 decided to boycott twenty-six chauvinistic and tendentious works. In 1935, when the Nazis were already in power in Germany, French and German historians met, as a result of a private German initiative, and discussed the forty most vexed questions of Franco-German rela-

tions in the period 1789 to 1935. In nearly every case a version of the disputed point for the guidance of textbook writers was agreed by both sides; where no agreement could be reached (e.g., Belgian neutrality in 1914 and reparations), the views of both parties were stated. The Nazis prevented the publication of these Franco-German Theses of 1935 in Germany, but they have been influential both in substance and as a guide to technique in the period since 1945. In May 1951 a meeting of French and German historians in Paris reconsidered the Theses of 1935; the revised Theses will be published in the periodicals of the French and German history teachers' associations and in the second *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht* (1952).

The League of Nations also concerned itself from 1924 until 1937 with the question of history teaching, but national self-esteem and the deterioration of the international situation after 1931 prevented its concern having any practical effect.

In spite of these first steps towards objective and enlightened history teaching, the world between the wars was increasingly dominated by nations which deliberately used distorted versions of history as a basic part of their preparations for revolution or war: the economic interpretation in the U.S.S.R.; the racial interpretation in Germany; the Roman interpretation in Italy; Shintoism in Japan. This use of distorted and chauvinistic history teaching as propaganda played an essential part in the outbreak and spread of the second World War. So the end of the war with the collapse of Germany and Japan brought a unique opportunity for the resumption of international co-operation in history textbook reform to match the much wider realization of the importance of the subject for the maintenance of peace.

Western Germany entered the period of reconstruction with no history textbooks at all, because the Nazi textbooks were too completely Nazi to be useable in a democratic country. But there was for some years no paper on which to print new textbooks and the Nazis had seen to it that the standard historical works on which objective textbooks must be based were not available in Germany, and that many of the men who could have written unprejudiced textbooks were dead or in exile. Many German teachers had been demoralized by the experiences which they had suffered between 1933 and 1945, and by the identification of different versions of history with different political creeds. It seemed to them impossible to teach history without committing themselves to a definite political creed — Communist, Nazi or democratic. Since they lived in fear of a Communist revolution or a Nazi revival, they hesitated to commit themselves to democratic history teaching, and took refuge in teaching pre-history or local studies in place of history.

In this dark and threatening situation a small group of courageous Germans, encouraged and supported by the British occupation authorities, launched a movement for the reform of German history teaching and the provision of objective and enlightened history textbooks. This movement has led within four years to the international exchange and review of history textbooks on a scale unthought of before 1939.

The leader of this group is Dr Georg Eckert, Professor of History at the Teachers' Training College (*Kant Hochschule*) in Brunswick, and Chairman of the History Teaching Committee of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Lehrerverbände* (A.G.D.L. — the largest West German teachers' association, with about 70,000 members). After various preliminary steps by this group, of which the most original was the launching of the series *Beiträge zum Geschichtsunterricht* with paper obtained from the off-cuts of a newspaper press, the British occupation authorities decided to support Professor Eckert in organizing an Anglo-German History Teachers' Conference in Brunswick. This conference met in July 1949; the English party consisted of eighteen history teachers from all types of school and five of His Majesty's Inspectors of Education; the German party was made up of about a hundred history teachers and training college lecturers from the British Zone of Germany and Western Berlin. Of the many lectures given by members of both parties, the deepest impression was made by the lecture on 'History teaching for citizenship and world peace' delivered by Mr E. H. Dance, Senior History Master at Wolverhampton Grammar School and a Vice-President of the Historical Association. Mr Dance's remarks in this lecture on the harm done to international understanding by ignorant, tendentious or chauvinistic history textbooks were the foundation of the widespread international exchange and review of history textbooks which Professor Eckert has organized since 1949.

In August 1949 Professor Eckert attended the Historical Association's Summer School in Hull, and was able to arrange for the exchange and review of English and German history textbooks. This arrangement was confirmed later in the year by the International Committee and the Council of the Historical Association. As a result, seven English and seven German history textbooks were exchanged and reviewed before the second Anglo-German History Teachers' Conference in July 1950.

Between the autumn of 1949 and the spring of 1950 Professor Eckert established personal relations with the leading teachers' associations of Denmark and France, and arranged with them for the exchange and review of history textbooks. All this international cooperation was approved by the Annual General Meeting of the A.G.D.L. in June 1950.

The second Anglo-German History Teachers' Conference met in Brunswick in July 1950. The English party consisted of four teachers of history in grammar schools and two university lecturers, led by Mr Dance; the German party of about a dozen school teachers and training college and university lecturers was led by Professor Eckert; Mr Dance and Professor Eckert took the chair alternately. Each party spoke its own language, and very little interpretation was found necessary. An American and a French official observer attended the Conference, the American being the Secretary of the influential National Council for the Social Studies. Duplicated copies of the reviews of the seven English and seven German history textbooks were distributed and thoroughly discussed. Lectures on vexed questions of Anglo-German relations in the period 1890 to 1914 were given by members of both parties, and after prolonged discussion an agreed version of the six most disputed questions during this period was drawn up for the guidance of textbook writers (published in the issue of *History* for October 1950 and in the first *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht* (1951)). English film strips and a film on German history were also projected and discussed.

In August 1950 Professor Eckert led the German delegation to the first UNESCO International Schoolbook Seminar in Brussels. There he was able to follow up the contact with the National Council for the Social Studies made in July in Brunswick, and to conclude a formal agreement for the exchange and review of American and German history textbooks. In September the A.G.D.L. agreed to publish from 1951 onwards an annual *International Yearbook for History Teaching*, to publicize all the reviews of history textbooks resulting from the widespread international exchange which had been arranged, together with reports of the international conferences connected with the exchange and review.

Between the autumn of 1950 and the spring of 1951 arrangements were made by Professor Eckert with teachers' associations in Holland, Sweden and Norway for the exchange and review of history textbooks. But during the same period the movement, which had progressed with such rapidity and without a check since July 1949, received a blow as severe as it was unexpected from the English side. The International Committee of the Historical Association, faced by the practical results of the second Anglo-German History Teachers' Conference which it had helped to organize, decided to withdraw from practical participation in the international exchange and review of history textbooks, while continuing to support the movement in principle. The reasons for this surprising change of mind, which led to the resignation of the Chairman and Secretary of the International Committee in protest, are obscure. The Historical Association is the smallest and poorest, certainly in

comparison with the number of history teachers in its home country, of all the voluntary associations participating in the movement (7600 members, compared with the 70,000 of the *A.G.D.L.* and the 180,000 of the French *Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale*). Although the heaviest items of expenditure — the cost of attending conferences in Germany — have been borne by the German Section of the Foreign Office, fear of incurring expenditure from funds already too scanty for existing commitments undoubtedly played a part in the decision to withdraw. But that the decisive motives were psychological and personal, rather than of a policy nature, seems to be shown by the resignation of the officers of the Committee in protest against the decision to withdraw.

This decision of the Historical Association threw the Anglo-German arrangements into confusion, and no textbooks were exchanged between July 1950 and July 1951. But on the initiative of the *A.G.D.L.* the Foreign Office agreed to finance English participation in a third Anglo-German History Teachers' Conference, which met in Brunswick in July 1951. Mr Dance again led an English party of six, which included for the first time a Professor to match the cohorts of Professors habitually deployed by the Germans. The organization was on roughly the same lines as had been found so successful in 1950, and an American official observer again attended. The subjects discussed were Anglo-German relations in the period 1850 to 1890, school broadcasting, and the future of the Anglo-German exchange of textbooks. No difference of views on relations in the period 1850 to 1890 was found sufficient to warrant the drafting of an agreed version as in 1950. The discussion of school broadcasting was rendered rather one-sided by the last minute failure of the B.B.C. to send their promised representative with recordings of their school broadcasts, with the result that all the recordings heard and discussed were German. It was decided to resume the exchange and review of textbooks between the *A.G.D.L.* and the group of individuals around Mr Dance, even though this group was backed by no English association and possessed no financial resources. This act of faith was the most heartening and encouraging result of the 1951 meeting. Almost equally encouraging was the news that at least one English and two German textbooks had been modified in new editions as a result of the 1950 reviews — one German book very substantially. Advance copies of the first *International Yearbook for History Teaching* (1951) were also distributed — a large octavo volume of 340 pages, which will be sold for DM 2.80 (about five shillings in English money) so as to secure the widest possible circulation and publicity.

The present position of the international exchange and review of history textbooks is therefore as follows. With the full support of

UNESCO and the High Commissions of the Allied Powers in West Germany, the *A.G.D.L.* is exchanging and reviewing history textbooks with similar voluntary associations (in nearly every case professional associations of teachers) in the U.S.A., France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Holland. But after a promising start the English Historical Association, which had helped to launch the movement by being the first foreign voluntary association to cooperate with the *A.G.D.L.*, withdrew from active participation, though continuing to support the movement in principle. After a year's interruption of the Anglo-German exchange, the *A.G.D.L.* decided to cooperate with England through a group of private English individuals. This situation is probably typically English, but it cannot be regarded as satisfactory or as worthy of English education or scholarship. If England is to continue to cooperate on equal terms in this most promising movement for international understanding and friendship, some voluntary association which can speak as an equal to the *A.G.D.L.*, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the *Fédération de l'Education Nationale* must accept responsibility for the English contribution. The most satisfactory solution would be for the Historical Association to take its head out of the sand and accept its responsibilities, instead of running away from them. Failing this, one of the great English associations of teachers should be persuaded to accept this responsibility, although the English associations seem to lack the interest in and the organization to deal with a separate school subject, like history, possessed by their foreign counterparts.

POSTSCRIPT. While this article was in the press an official statement of the standpoint of the Council of the Historical Association has been published in number 126/127 of History. This statement does not invalidate any of the views expressed in the article. C.B.

BOOK REVIEWS

A. DE SELINCOURT: *The Schoolmaster*. John Lehmann, 8s. 6d. net.

Mr de Selincourt's book is concerned with the qualities needed in a teacher and with the methods a teacher should adopt. The author is an experienced practical schoolmaster: his book is pleasantly written and it touches many problems affecting teachers, especially those in boarding schools. On all these matters Mr de Selincourt says much that is sensible, but little that is either new or profound.

The central contention of the book is that a teacher can only teach what he *is* — it is his personality that counts — he can only share his experience. This is a popular view today, but it cannot be said that Mr de Selincourt has put forward a really convincing case for it. The true task of the teacher is to introduce his pupils to some field of knowledge — a field which he has himself experienced but which is much larger than his own experience of it. The real determinant of what a teacher selects to teach, and of how he does it, is not the teacher's personality, but the nature of his subject. And a knowledge of a subject is not at all the same thing as an understanding of the nature of that knowledge — of the philosophy of a subject. This does not vary with the teacher's personality: it is common to all teachers and it lies at the basis of all teaching. It is true that within these limits there are many methods, some suiting some personalities and some, others. But to stress this aspect is to mistake the trivial for the fundamental. And to say that teaching is a personal relationship is not to say very much: if it is not much more than this, it is not education.

Mr de Selincourt is, I think, writing mainly from the standpoint of the specialist teacher of English literature, a subject which he thinks should be the basis of the school curriculum. This may account for his curiously limited idea of the art of teaching, for in literature, much more than in most subjects, it is true to say that the teacher must share his aesthetic experience, that he must himself enjoy what he wants his pupils to enjoy. But even here, the real basis of method must be something more impersonal and more permanent than 'what the teacher is'. Mr de Selincourt writes with commendable enthusiasm on the teaching of literature and says much that will be useful to the intending teacher of this subject. But he never seems to face the central difficulty of teaching literature to a *class*, of finding something that attracts thirty people at once. Nor does he seem to realize that the Dalton plan, being a method of individual tuition, overcomes just this difficulty. On more general problems of education, Mr de Selincourt is less reliable, and it is misleading to assert that Plato believed that a better system of education could transform society: there is plenty of evidence, particularly in the *Republic*, to show that he believed that education might be largely ineffective in an unreformed society, though it had a fundamental part to play in an ideal society.

W. H. BURSTON

WILHELM KOSCH: *Deutsches Literaturlexikon*. 2nd edition. Band I: Aachen-Hasenauer. A. Francke Verlag, Bern. 79 Swiss Francs.

It is rare, nowadays, in any walk of life, to find a utensil that is intended to be no more than a utensil. And it is the great merit of the present work that although it covers as wide a field as any history of German literature, it retains this modesty of intention and hence gives rise to none of those misgivings with which the latter kind of work inevitably leaves us. What we find here are the concrete presuppositions, the positive data of German literature, and no more than these. The arrangement is alphabetical; and it may well be that the exact and ready use of

alphabetical indexes and of chronologies is the most valuable heritage which the positivist habit of exalting 'objectiveness' has bequeathed to the study of literature. As a companion to German studies this dictionary is more abundant in its material, better arranged, more up-to-date and, as far as I can tell, more reliable than any other work of its kind. It contains, first, the names and pen-names of nearly all German authors — and authors on German topics — of any importance, and quite a few besides. These are followed in each instance by a brief biography; a chronological list of the author's works; a list of works of fiction (it is surprising how many such works there are in the literature of the last two centuries) in which the author appears as a character; and a very full list of critical writings. Apart from these entries on authors there are excellent notes on all those towns and countries (German and other) which bear on German literature; articles on important publishers, periodicals and literary and learned societies. And there are, finally, valuable notes on genres, motifs, legends and myths, lists of first lines of important poems and songs, and of commonly used book-titles. While no attempt has been made at competing with existing bibliographies there is hardly any subject in this field on which Professor Kosch's work would not be able to give a comprehensive and clear survey of all available data.

There are some omissions. Among the authors I missed the melancholy Adam Bernd, who in 1736 published one of those heart-searching autobiographies which set out to convert and end up by being literature; the Moravian Bishop Jan Amos Comenius, whose influence on German writings was immense; his teacher Johann Heinrich Alsted (d. 1638), who wrote one of the first encyclopaedias. The article on Konrad Celtis omits to mention Mr L. W. Forster's edition of his works; and the article on the twelfth-century *Carmina Cantabrigensia* makes no mention of the two main editions (1869, 1926), nor of Naumann's bibliography. Among periodicals, the famous *Acta Eruditorum* should have been included. In writing about Frankfurt am Main, Professor Kosch forgets the wood for the trees and leaves out any reference to Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (though he lists a novel about Goethe's life there); in the article on Frankfurt an der Oder no direct mention is made of Ewald or Heinrich von Kleist; and the article on Göttingen omits to refer the reader to the two main histories of the University (J. S. Pütter, 1796, and G. von Selle, 1937). The *Amphitryon*-motif in German literature is sufficiently important to have been included here, and one would certainly like to have a note on *Analogy*. On the other hand, it needs no gift of prescience to assert that too much has been made of the literature of the last fifty years; with scrupulous fairness Professor Kosch has listed an enormous number of minor National Socialist authors whose work (they themselves would be the first to agree) might well be forgotten; and the same is true (though they would hardly agree) of the countless minor writers who left Germany in 1933. But these errors of commission are to be expected where judgments of value are replaced by an attempt at completeness of presentation, and the advantages of the encyclopaedic method in such a work as this far outweigh its drawbacks.

It would, however, be absurd to conclude that such a list as the above (or any other that might be compiled) presents anything like a serious indictment of Professor Kosch's effort. This is the work of a life-time's devotion; and the reader need only consult the twenty closely-printed columns on Goethe; the account of the literature on Berlin; or look a little more closely at such a feat of condensation as the article on the *Burgtheater*, to realize what a splendid achievement this is. In his preface the author relates in a matter-of-fact way how after 1930 (when the first edition, about half the size of the present, was published) he set out to expand his card-indexes, and how, after many vicissitudes, in the Spring of 1945 'my house at Nymwegen was exposed to the events of the front-line'. To him (and to the lucky chance that enabled him to salvage his collections) all students of German literature are indebted for a work that has no rivals

in the field. The specialist and the literary *flâneur* alike will find here, in a compact and handy format (the volume attains to the highest standards of Swiss book-production), all the factual information they can make use of when they enter on their reading. And they will get their material in a presentation at once more exact and less obtrusive than any history of literature is likely to give them.

J. P. M. STERN

T. D. KENDRICK: *British Antiquity*. Methuen, 21s. net.

To say that this trenchant and witty book makes a dull subject interesting would be less than adequate; not inherently dull, the subject of *British Antiquity* as conceived by Mr Kendrick is almost too lively, but he has managed to keep it under some sort of control. He describes what British intellectuals, living between the twelfth and the seventeenth century, thought about the remote past of Britain. His book is learned and definitive; he has got everything in; and he has had the brilliant idea of organizing it round a unifying theme: Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. He shows how the *Historia* achieved an immediate and wide success; how it continued in vogue for some centuries, in spite of advances in historical criticism; and how at last it came to be discredited as a serious contribution to British history.

About 1135 Geoffrey of Monmouth published his history of Britain, covering the period from the landing of the Trojan prince Brutus c.1170 B.C., through the expansion of Britain under Arthur, down to the retreat of the British to Wales in the seventh century A.D. Geoffrey seems to have worked on the basis of a certain amount of received legend, and he displays a good deal of antiquarian knowledge (Mr Kendrick might have said a little more about this), but the book seems to have been mainly his own invention. In the prevailing climate of intellectual levity (outside the field of theology) it was immediately successful; a work of high literary merit, it was convincing as history and useful as an Anglo-Norman answer to the contemporary French cult of Charlemagne. Having continued authoritative during the Middle Ages, the British History gained increased prestige when the prophecies of Merlin were fulfilled by the Welsh victory at Bosworth and the political successes of the Tudor dynasty. It was accepted without difficulty by scholars who were acute enough in their own subjects: by John Rous, though he was familiar through his studies of armour with the concept of development from the technically primitive to the complex; by William of Worcester and John Leland, collectors of accurate data for English topography. The structure of the British History proved capable of supporting massive additions: the Glastonbury legends accrued at the end of the twelfth century, and as late as the sixteenth, Bale made an important contribution by reconstructing the pre-Trojan epoch in Britain and thus carrying back the political history of the island to 2014 B.C.

From the first some rational if not always disinterested criticism accompanied the progress of the British History. William of Newburgh, an honest Yorkshireman, made damaging objections. Gerald of Wales seems to have known too much about his countryman's mental processes. The humanists, sceptical and cosmopolitan, practically ignored the insular tradition. In the sixteenth century, descriptions and drawings of backward tribes in North America suggested a revised view of the ancient Britons. New sources and interests were developed in religious controversy, notably by archbishop Parker and his assistants; scholars who had gone to the trouble of learning Old English acquired a professional interest in building up the Anglo-Saxons, hitherto out of the picture. Meanwhile rival orthodoxies developed among the old believers, among exponents of the Welsh and Scotch versions of the British History, and of the claims to antiquity of the two universities; and their controversies were conducted in a spirit of uninhibited acrimony which, if it could be re-introduced, would add to the enter-

tainment value of modern scholarship. By the end of the sixteenth century Geoffrey's historical romance had practically disintegrated, leaving the ground clear for the solid work of Camden and the later seventeenth-century antiquarians.

There must always be those who reconstruct the past, especially of their own nation, to suit their prejudices and feelings; and a comparison of the implied values in medieval and modern mythology is favourable to twelfth-century Englishmen. They were satisfied to regard themselves as descendants of refugees from a defeated Mediterranean state; and they did not suppose that they had necessarily improved on the England of Ambrosius and Arthur. What is the modern mythology of English origins? Probably a debased version of the account popularized by Green and Freeman: one that is not now much concerned with the cultural achievements and milder virtues of our Teutonic forefathers, nor, I think, very much with their supposed aptitude for self-government. Assuming that progress has been continuous and automatic, we are willing enough to admit to barbarian ancestors of the right kind with a record of being on the winning side.

T. A. M. BISHOP

FRIEDRICH MEINECKE: *The German Catastrophe*. Translated by Sidney B. Fay. Harvard University Press: London, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 24s. net.

No English translation has been published here or in America, to the reviewer's knowledge, of any of the three single volume works of the highest distinction for which Professor Meinecke is chiefly celebrated outside Germany, namely *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, *Die Idee der Staatsräson*, and *Die Entstehung des Historismus*. This is in spite of the fact that even as a text book the first of these is an unrivalled commentary on the relation of political and historical thought and action in Germany between the age of Frederick the Great and that of Bismarck. As Meinecke himself observes in the preface to the last of these books, which was published in 1936 when a kind of degenerate historicism plus *raison d'état* was licensing the excesses of German nationalist politics, all three are connected, and the brief *German Catastrophe*, which has now been issued in an indifferent and expensive translation, may be regarded as a consistent if disillusioned epilogue to them.

It is an historical essay of unequal but sometimes rare depth, possessing the fluency of work written from memory and without references. It is concerned with the direct reasons in the social history of imperial and republican Germany why Nazism was able to possess the hearts as well as the hands of so many Germans, rather than with the indispensable but now somewhat over-worked theme of theoretical Nazism's antecedents in German political and philosophical literature. Meinecke invokes the factor of chance (which Professor Woodward has also emphasized in relation to the Nazi revolution and the Nazi wars) and defines it as 'that which does not arise from a general and over-powering necessity but from a unique and unexpected intervention of some sort of extraneous factor in the course of history'. His examples in the annals of modern Germany: the personality of William II and the acceptance by Hindenburg of Hitler's claim to power when the appeal of Nazism had, as he maintains, passed its peak, are suggestive rather than convincing.

In the sphere of 'general and overpowering necessity' Meinecke recognizes that the Nazi episode was the climax of the German version of the more general revolution of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries, in which he discerns two sometimes overlapping waves, namely socialism and nationalism. This is not, in itself, an original analysis, but an emphasis which is unusual from an historian of ideas is given by Meinecke to the unparalleled tide of increase in Western population carrying these waves as a factor of a new order in determining the pace as well as the direction of political and social change. He has no new word for the new

nationalism, coupled in the twentieth-century revolution with socialism just as the old nationalism was coupled with democratic liberalism in the revolution of a century earlier, but he recalls the conviction of Burckhardt (whom he has always seemed to revere with Ranke as his master in historiography) to the effect that twentieth-century nationalism would amount to submission to the state as authority, rather than exultation in it as the means of collective self-expression. Perhaps one might now express Meinecke's extension of Burckhardt's judgment by suggesting that in our own latter dark age of migrations and expansion of peoples — and of machines — a kind of 'neo-commendation' has been taking shape — a commendation to the state instead of to a lord, for the sake of economic and often spiritual rather than personal security.

Although he was writing the German edition in the bitterness of 1946, Meinecke was frank in admitting that Nazism had provided a solution, albeit an evil one, to the competition between the two waves of socialism and nationalism, and he does not deny Hitler some attributes of genius. There is a curious absence of explicit acknowledgement of the physical as distinct from the spiritual atrocities of the régime. Pure Germans, like Russians of the emigration or ex-Communist sympathisers, seem to prefer to rely on error rather than sin, on oppression rather than inhumanity for their respective condemnations of the two totalitarian governments. In comparing Hitler unfavourably with Napoleon Meinecke makes the interesting observation that the Austrian appeared even more definitely than the Corsican as a foreigner to his subjects and he seems to imply that this relationship contributed some kind of esoteric force. One is reminded of Toynbee's identification of 'March men' as the almost invariable founders of empires.

The most valuable part of Meinecke's essay is contained in the first three or four chapters where he analyses the spirit of the Second Reich and the relation of its vestigial elements to Hitlerism under the Weimar republic, the last-named

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being a régime whose political ideals he treats with considerable respect. His arguments run alternately as an apology and an accusation, but the tender appraisal by an aged historian of such eminence of the environment of his own youth is more impressive and illuminating than the boring objurgations of some historians in their prime, whose cosmopolitanism is that of the Intelligence Corps or its American equivalent. Meinecke does not excuse militarism; indeed he seems to exaggerate or oversimplify the acceptance of Hitler by the General Staff, seeing what we know of their furtive opposition to him (largely for the wrong reasons) even before 1941. Nor is he lenient to *Borussismus*, the untranslatable word for which we use 'Prussianism' when emphasizing its harshest side. But it is instructive to find him championing the unsuccessful national socialist Naumann as a potential saviour of Germany before the first war, and quoting frequently and effectively from the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, the moderate conservative periodical made illustrious by Treitschke, as a mirror of liberal thought in those years.

Writing in 1946 the author of the *German Catastrophe* had to take account of the unexhausted prejudices of the occupying Powers, and it is doubtless deference rather than sincere judgment which makes him give Soviet Communism the benefit of the doubts then held by Western Governments and public opinion as regards its being an illiberal and expansive system of the same class as Nazism. Nor could Meinecke allow himself to see, in his eighty-seventh year, the shape of any national resurgence. His prescription is the revival, as a substitute, of what he calls the 'classical liberalism' of the Goethe era, Goethe being for him a political as well as a cultural exemplar. But this archaism is presumably intended to comfort the survivors of the German upper and middle classes only; for the German masses, on whose natural increase Meinecke himself lays such stress, he can offer in theory no more than any other German liberal, restricted by benevolence or by foreign tutelage, has been able to offer in practice.

MICHAEL VVYVAN

M. J. C. HODGART: *The Ballads*. *Hutchinson's University Library*, 7s. 6d.

The critic must have before him a printed text whose authorship and date are known to the critic's readers and whose writings are accessible to them. Prose tales and poetry that have been handed down by oral tradition often have origins belonging to a time and place so uncertain that their inheritors can only guess when and by whom they were first uttered. More serious still, we often cannot tell in what language they were originally composed. For as they are passed from generation to generation they are altered according to the tongue and poetic gifts of those who recite and sing them, sometimes for better, often for worse.

During the last two hundred years and more collectors have written down many of these traditional poems and ballads and folk-tales, while many more have been lost. Also poets, inheriting the old tradition but living in a time when it has been conventional for poets to publish their work in print over their own names, have adapted this old material, and by publishing it in this way have given it a settled text and an agreed if somewhat fictitious authorship. Some of the collectors have more closely resembled these poets than true collectors. For instead of taking down the poem or tale exactly as they heard it from the lips of the narrator, they have adapted it to conform to the literary conventions of their own day. In doing so they were exercising their own craft upon the raw material, and in fact were probably changing its essential quality far more than the poet who understood the true nature of that quality.

It is hard to draw the line between these three kinds of people, to whom we owe the existence of folk poetry in print today. One of the best examples in these islands of the true collector is J. F. Campbell of Islay, who in 1872 published *Leabhar na Feinne*, a collection of the Ossianic ballads from every traceable

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manuscript of previous collections, in addition to everything he was able to recover orally. Bishop Percy exemplifies the collector who accepts material that has been tampered with, and who sees fit to tinker with it himself. Even he is far removed from a Walter Scott, both poet and collector, and one is rarely certain which. Robert Burns is the supreme example of the inheritor of folk poetry who deliberately adapts and improves, then publishes. Of *Auld lang syne* he wrote: 'The air is but mediocre: but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.' It certainly was when 'taken down' by Robert Burns.

How is the literary critic to approach such material as this? The objects of his interest, oral folk poetry and traditional ballads, are floating about on the lips of the people, ever changing, frequently becoming lost. If one of them was taken down by a true collector, say in 1800, it is a particular version peculiar to a certain place in that year of a ballad that might have borne little resemblance to it elsewhere and earlier, and may bear as little resemblance to it, if it survives at all, today. If the ballad is printed in a collection like Percy's it may have little likeness to any ballad that was ever declaimed or sung. If the critic turns to Scott or Hogg or Burns, how is he to decide what these poets have composed and what they have adapted? This is the fundamental question; whether traditional poetry is a fit subject for literary criticism. When a literary critic does come forward with a work upon the subject, it offers a convenient opportunity to look for the answer; and Mr M. J. C. Hodgart has done so in this book.

It is a study of the ballads of England and Lowland Scotland, the text used being *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* edited by F. J. Child and published between 1882 and 1898. The approach to this collection of ballads from so many sources is explained in the Introduction: 'The conclusion to be drawn from the available evidence is that England and Scotland form a common ballad area, just as they form a common area for other varieties of folklore and for all kinds of medieval verse. (By Scotland, of course, Lowland Scotland is meant. It has a cultural history distinct from that of the Highlands, and very like that of Saxon England.) Because the best collections of the early nineteenth century were made in Scotland, and therefore so many of Child's versions were in a Scottish dialect, the basic identity of Scottish and English balladry has been obscured, and the facts have been distorted by nationalistic Scots and sentimental Englishmen.'

Of course England and Scotland form a common ballad area: the whole of Europe does so. We shall see when we reach Mr Hodgart's comments on the ballad of King Orfeo how dangerous it can be to draw arbitrary lines round smaller areas within it. Again it is certainly true that Lowland Scotland has a cultural history distinct from that of the Highlands, and very like that of Saxon England. But we are speaking of degrees of intimacy in the cultural contacts between peoples, that were changing and fluctuating constantly within the larger area. For instance it is remarkable how the tale of Sigurd the Dragon-slayer came to be enshrined in the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, in the *Elder Edda* of Iceland, in the Faroese *Sjurdur Kvaedi*, before the version of the *Nibelungenlied* which we possess was composed. It is remarkable too that no Celtic version survives, although on the Isle of Man Sigurd is still to be seen, roasting the dragon's heart over a fire in stone, while Grane paws the ground near by. By what route did this splendid tale spread west and north from the Burgundian lands, in what languages was it first told, or how many different tales went into the first ballad that a minstrel sang? It would be quite profitless to speculate about these things, just as it would be absurd to rope off a common ballad area among the countries in which the tale, or certain forms of it, survive.

Mr. Hodgart needed a text, and Child's collection of ballads in English and Lowland Scots provided him with a most convenient one, accessible and com-

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prehensible to his readers. He could have used it without proceeding to loose conclusions about the special identity of Lowland Scottish and English balladry. The similarities are obvious and do not need to be stressed. What should be stressed is the extent to which this similarity springs from the fact that collectors whose texts Child uses were taking down the Scottish ballads in an anglicized form. Scottish dialects were still the languages of the ancient poetry; English was the language of polite letters. What the collectors did is perfectly natural, even if James Hogg's mother did expostulate to Scott that in writing down some ballads he had spoilt them altogether. But it is extraordinary that in the passage from the Introduction that has been quoted, Mr Hodgart should have succeeded in placing such an entirely opposite interpretation on the facts. Needless to say, this interpretation is a great hindrance to him in understanding his material. A brief example must suffice. The ballads of Lowland Scotland are remarkable, perhaps above all else, for the sense of the supernatural which they convey. This can only be a quality of the Scottish ballads, because there is no equivalent vocabulary of supernatural terms in the English language, which has consequently adopted the Scottish ones. Such words as 'weird' and 'eerie' have passed over a language border.

Why did the author consider it necessary that his text should have this special identity? Chapter Eight of his book perhaps helps the reader to account for it. In this chapter, entitled 'The Ballads and Literature', the author traces the impact of the ballads on English literature. Starting with the Elizabethans he looks for their influence on English dramatists, antiquarians and poets. Scottish learned literature begins, as a part of English literature, with Walter Scott. Inasmuch as England and Scotland were separate and generally hostile countries during most of the period under review, it is scarcely surprising to find that the ballads with 'a Scottish dialect' so predominant in earlier chapters were nevertheless apparently unknown to English men of letters throughout the centuries of their greatest popularity.

What would have been the result if Mr Hodgart had extended his study of the impact of folk poetry on literature to the literature of Scotland? He would have found the frontiers of his Lowland Scottish-English ballad area crumbling before his eyes. He would have found Gavin Douglas's *Greit Gowmacmorne*, and *Fyn Macoul* and the heroes of the old Highland ballads in the pages of Barbour, and Dunbar, Boece and David Lindsay. Be it noticed that all these men, historians and poets, were writing at least half a century before the time at which Mr Hodgart elects to begin his chapter, 'The Ballads and Literature'. This is not to say that Scottish literature is as rich as or more ancient than, English literature. Nor should it be concluded that the influence of the ancient Gaelic ballads on Scottish literature is anything but slight. The existence of a Scottish literature side by side with Scottish balladry, not its merits or importance, is all that need be stressed. The existence of a Highland balladry, traces of which are to be found in the literature, is all that need be mentioned here. At the time when the first Lowland Scottish collections were being made, indeed, this Highland folk-lore was beginning to have a considerable influence on Lowland poets who adapted ancient ballads and composed in the ballad metre. Burns's correspondence makes this very clear, and in John Leyden's *Tour of the Western Highlands*, 1800 one learns how he found the theme for his finest ballad, *The Mermaid*. The bard of Teviotdale wrote in English now; but his theme was a Gaelic tale from the island of Colonsay. There is no mention of the Highland minstrelsy in Mr Hodgart's book, while his reference to MacPherson's fraudulent 'Ossian' epic might appear to imply that the Scottish Highlands had been omitted from his study because they produced nothing but an eighteenth-century hoax.

Indeed, what other construction is to be put on this omission when the author goes on to say that the two nearest ballad regions to his Lowland Scottish-English

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one are the French and the Scandinavian? The Scandinavian region to which our attention is drawn is that of Denmark. On page 83 we read: 'the ballads of European countries other than Denmark and Britain show no definite connection with the dance.' Now it so happens that the only country in Europe in which people still dance to ancient native ballads is Faroe. The greatest of these ballads were composed before 1250 in the language still universally spoken in Faroe — ancient Icelandic modified by medieval Norwegian. Centuries later the Faroe Islands passed to the Danish crown, to which they still owe allegiance. To call the Faroese ballads Danish would not only be consistent with Mr Hodgart's thesis as propounded for the British 'ballad area', but would put the only intelligible interpretation on the passage quoted of which it is susceptible. Danish scholars have, however, resisted the temptation to do this.

In Britain today the Scottish Highlanders alone continue, in their *Puirt a beul* or mouth music, the ancient practice of dancing to a verse tale sung by one of the company present. The songs of *Puirt a beul* are indeed light and trivial, not to be compared with the epic grandeur of the Faroese *Kvaedir*, as the present writer, who has taken part in the singing and dancing of both, can testify.

The influence of Scandinavian balladry in Britain is certainly interesting. On the one hand the Fenians wage war on Magnus III of Norway in countless Gaelic tales and ballads; heroes from Ireland before the coming of Patrick summoned out of the timeless past to do battle with one of the last great Norse conquerors. On the Scandinavian side there are the tantalizing fragments remaining in Shetland from the period when it was part of the Norse Duchy of Faroe and Shetland — perhaps earlier. Only one ballad survives, the *Hildina Saga*, taken down phonetically in the eighteenth century by a Scot who understood no Norn. It contains no refrain, so we cannot be certain whether it was used for the dance like the *kvaedir* which it otherwise so closely resembles. There are other fragments of great interest in the Shetland dialect, in particular those that tell how Christ hung nine hours on the Rootless Tree, as Odin hung for nine days in the Norse legends. Here it is important to mention the Shetland version of *King Orfeo*, with its corrupt Norn refrain. All Mr Hodgart has to say about *King Orfeo* is the following: 'There is one ballad which is quite certainly a re-working of a Lai: *King Orfeo* is related to the beautiful Middle English *Sir Orfeo*.' The existence of a Shetland version is nowhere hinted at, though it would be fascinating to learn how Mr Hodgart knows quite certainly that a French Court Lay of Breton origin had reached the northernmost island of Unst by way of Middle English early enough to acquire a Norn refrain.

Mr Hodgart's preconceptions have affected his treatment of ballad music *a fortiori*. For the traditional folk music of the Gael, as Arnold Schoenberg has mentioned, 'is of an unsurpassed beauty and full of striking and characteristic traits'; and there has been no such obstacle as that raised by language differences to impede its spread to the south. In ignoring what is perhaps the most important Gaelic contribution to British culture, Mr Hodgart has robbed his chapter on ballad music of its principal interest. It is possible to pass over this chapter in turn, since we are concerned here with the criticism of traditional poetry.

The conclusion of the matter is surely that the legacies of oral tradition are not proper subjects for literary criticism. Mr Hodgart has every right to disagree, and in embarking on his task he probably chose the most convenient text that was to be found. But it is strange that a scholar should have proceeded on assumptions so demonstrably false, and should have brought to their support so many significant omissions and errors of fact. It is stranger still that any author should jibe at those who might not agree with him in a subject so full of uncertainties. Yet we have only to remember Addison, recommending his polished eighteenth-century version of *Chevy Chase*. This is a subject over which eminent men of letters have lost stature before now.

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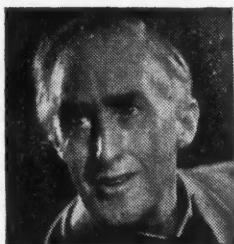
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The present volumes maintain the very high standards of their predecessors in all respects, and make one look forward to the completion of the edition. They make available much new and recent information about Pope's ambitious project for a 'system of ethics in the Horatian way' — something between *Paradise Lost* and a more Addisonian attempt to 'put morality in a good humour'. The *Essay on Man*, and the four *Epistles to Several Persons*, usually called the *Moral Essays*, after Warburton, were the only parts of the project to be completed; and the *Essay* is its only systematic realization. Its reputation has suffered more than any of Pope's works from allegations of philosophical and spiritual inadequacy and this increases the importance of the vindication which Professor Mack offers.

He does so persuasively. Pope did not merely versify Bolingbroke; nor do Pope's borrowings from him, Shaftesbury, William King, and many others, detract from his own full responsibility for the ideas and attitudes expressed in the *Essay*. Pope steers his own course through the available traditions in theodicy and ethics in a way which commands respect. Having established Pope's intellectual integrity, Mack goes on to a literary analysis which does much to dispel the irony that 'the poem of Pope's which is most perfect in its formal unity and most impressive in its theme should be the one least known in our age, as we grow increasingly aware of the value of his later works'. Its value is not, of course, as a contribution to philosophy. We never entertain such expectations of other poets. But if we grant Pope the license in using philosophical material that we so readily grant Shakespeare or Milton, we shall recognize in the *Essay on Man* a masterly poetic handling of some of the great moral themes of Western civilization.

Rereading the *Essay* from the viewpoint suggested, remembering that its author is after all closer to the Elizabethan Age than to ours, the case seemed to have been proved. The poem has a more intense personal emphasis than any other of Pope's; and it also has a vein of inspired rational eloquence that is unique. Still, not all my difficulties and doubts have been resolved. And — since I have no time to be strictly fair — I will mention briefly why I think they arise.

Professor Mack seems to me to have been persuaded by his enthusiasm for Pope and his personal philosophical bias into a certain amount of strategic obnubilation of his adversary — an excellent tactic, no doubt, but hardly an editorial one. The bias — briefly against naturalist and secular trends — can be seen in a curious page on 'the scientific myth' (p. xlii). It causes him to minimize the deist tendency of the *Essay*, and, more important, to make some crucial aspects of the poem — its truth, value and logical congruity — rather difficult of access. The 'incompleteness and incoherence' of the *Essay* is admitted in general terms, but it is then put on the same level as that of Hobbes, whose system 'as is well known, contains a wide variety of contradictions and in part refutes itself'. I doubt if this is true; in any case the analogy is misleading and unfair. Nor are any of the more obvious logical inconsistencies — those mentioned by Pattison, for example, in his edition — put before the reader in the notes. Even some of the recondite jargon turns out to be loaded; 'ontosophy', for example, (p. xxxi), and 'theriophilily' (p. lxvii).



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LONGMANS

These criticisms suggest a more general demur. The history of ideas is one thing; their truth and logical congruence is another. At times Mack's demonstration of the 'painstakingly traditional' nature of Pope's ideas seems to confuse the historical and absolute considerations, and to suggest that a muddle is not a muddle if it is a very traditional one. This seems to me to be misguided as an approach to the history of ideas, and dangerous in its implications for literary criticism. A flower is not beautiful because it has long roots, although it often has.

F. W. Bateson's edition of the *Epistles to Several Persons* does not require such extended notice. By a necessary division of editorial labour, intellectual background has been largely left to his colleague, and his introduction is mainly devoted to a clear exposition of the complex history of the writing, publication and reception of the four epistles. We are also given a brief critical evaluation of the poems — *Of the Characters of Women* is the best, as being 'gayer . . . more honest and more accurate'. With this I agree, and also with the treatment of many points of detail which can serve as an implicit corrective of Professor Mack's view of the *Essay on Man*. To take three crucial examples, it is instructive to compare the two editors on 'virtue' (i. 157; ii. xxxviii), 'the ruling passion' (i. xxxvi-ii; ii. 28), and Warburton (i. xxi; ii. 5-11).

The editors are to be congratulated on having made available for the first time nearly all the material necessary for a full appreciation of an aspect of Pope's work which he, at least, preferred to any other. We are not, of course, obliged to agree with him. But we can at last see clearly what the issues are. A few identifications and other problems remain unsolved; more will no doubt be said about the *Essay on Man* in general; but the two editors have done their important and difficult task with considerable finality.

IAN WATT

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